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In this study the relationship between attention, embodiment, and consciousness is posited as the central question. Specifically, what are the current assumptions of these connections in popular ADHD literature, and how might a different conceptual model of attention more fully represent attention and its connections to learning as intended in lived experience?

This question will be explored non-empirically through a synthesis of popular ADHD literature, a philosophical exploration of how attention relates to consciousness, and a phenomenological queering of attentional models to more fully represent an embodied understanding of attention with respect to race class and gender.

As a central conclusion, popular ADHD literature tacitly assumes a misunderstanding of the relationship between the mind and the body in relation to attention and consciousness. This holds problems for a fully dynamic understanding of attention and its implications for pedagogy. A reoriented multidimensional approach to attention that reflects a more subtle understanding of the embodied subject more accurately represents attention and its connections to consciousness as understood in lived experience.

I WONDER AS I WANDER: A REORIENTATION OF ATTENTION, EMBODIMENT, AND CONSCIOUSNESS

by

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Approved by

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Committee Chair

To my mother, Ellen Reid, who taught me the power of the wandering body

To my siblings in spirit, Kelley Mitchell and Avery Pierce, who taught me the power of the wondering mind.

To my husband, Benjamin Thomas-Reid, who *queered* it all by teaching me that the healing power of playfulness could bring them both together.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Matthew Thomas-Reid has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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PREFACE

In 1984 I turned 5 years old. It is perhaps an interesting coincidence that, in the year Orwell promised would herald our love of Big Brother, I first met that which I would come to think of as my little brother. There were many firsts for me that year; I learned how to ride my first bike, I learned how to read my first book, I learned not to color on walls, and I learned that there was something wrong with me. My kindergarten teacher, after making me clean the mural off the time-out room wall, told my parents that I needed to see a doctor because I was clearly not fit for a regular classroom environment. My mother, ever diligent in her mission to do whatever was best for me, took me to a trusted pediatrician. That pediatrician told my mother that I would never graduate from high school, let alone college. He said that I would always have trouble in school, both academically and behaviorally. He suggested that I would likely be prone to destructive behaviors, and therefore have future trouble with the law as well as alcohol and drugs. My mother still has the doctor's report from that day over thirty years ago, and there are only three words written in the diagnosis box.

Short attention span.

Those three words would haunt me to this day. ADHD, still called by his childhood nickname ADD at the time, was only four years old, having just been added to the DSM III in 1980. I sort of playfully regard the disorder now as my younger brother – demanding, annoying, and always there. In my elementary years I spent my days in and out of psychologists offices and time-out spaces where I would complete a never-ending

list of missing homework assignments, while I spent my nights tearfully promising my caring yet beleaguered parents that I would do better in school. In those early elementary years, I remember days filled with straight backed seats staring at a picture of a forest on the cover of a textbook, imagining myself in the scene, wild, free, and unfettered. In the evenings, my mother recalls reading to me – what a sight it must have been! I would wander around the room, stand on my head, play with action figures, and yet if she quizzed me I could, in my wondering mind, recite back verbatim exactly what had just been read.

My mother. I am moved to tears when I think of her struggle to prove that doctor wrong. In her first trip to the psychologist's office, she was chastised for bringing me with her. She was told that the sessions were for her – not me. This was in the mid 1980s and, with my younger brother still in his infancy, the medical establishment relied on the decades old assumption that disorders of attention and hyperactivity were most likely the result of poor parenting. Mom was subjected to probing questions and condescending looks to the point that she finally decided to stop attending sessions. What she did, however, was absolutely groundbreaking. Rejecting the insinuation that my behaviors were (a) anyone's fault and (b) intrinsically bad, she made it her singular job to figure out how to help me. She read absolutely everything that she could find regarding ADD and hyperactivity, and then moved forward with two important assumptions. First, she assumed that there was nothing wrong with my brain. Second, she assumed that an important entry point to working through my behaviors was focusing on my body. Her tactics became Nutrition, imaginative play, physical activity in the form

of gymnastics and swimming, along with choosing toys that would develop what she called my eye-to-hand coordination skills. But my little brother was still there – always wanting attention.

In school I remember hours of sitting on the edge of the playground watching my peers play games while I was relegated to completing math worksheets for a second time, knowing that my first drafts were wadded up in tight little balls somewhere at the bottom of my backpack. My mother and father would sit in endless parent-teacher meetings being told about my learning deficiencies while wondering in bewilderment how this could be the same child that read encyclopedias for fun and arranged action figures into Greek phalanxes and Roman cohorts. I can imagine my little brother hiding in the shadows of those teacher meetings, silently taunting me.

In middle school I remember rushing through my assignments at a breakneck pace in the hopes of being the first student finished, knowing that if I was I might take the coveted spot in front of the classroom's single Tandy computer to play Oregon trail – a reward for the special students who finished their work early. It usually wasn't me. In eighth grade I was excited the day I learned that the school was going to implement an exploration block for 30 minutes every day. The block was reserved for specialized choice activities ranging from dance classes to computer club. I signed up for chess club only to be told that I had been selected for a special club, the 'learn how to do better in school' group. I spent that block making daily planners and writing lists that – you guessed it – wound up wadded up in those tight little balls again while my little brother laughed at my frustration.

By high school things with my little brother and me had gotten a bit better, though my experiences varied wildly from class to class. I would leave Latin in tears because my teacher shamed me in front of my peers for failing to bring my book, while I would leave History and English feeling like a genius. I guess my little brother didn't much like history.

In class I would sit in my seat wriggling for seven hours accomplishing next to nothing, while I could go home and, while pacing feverishly back and worth, dictate a five-page paper while my mother diligently typed it out for me on a borrowed typewriter. In those first high school years that typewriter saved my life, or at least my GPA. My handwriting, you see, was practically illegible. Absolutely nothing could prepare a person for the experience of trying to read my indecipherable mess. Paper after paper was handed back to me with the admonishment that they wouldn't accept "chicken scratch." I guess it was hard to write with a little brother constantly picking at me.

Then in 1995, the spring of my sophomore year, after months of saving and sacrificing, my dedicated working class father proudly presented me with my first computer, despite the fact that in those days a computer cost over a months salary for him. Everything changed. I could write; who knew? All of a sudden it was like some strange door was opened and I could finally communicate with written language – the spell checker didn't hurt either. It was on that computer that I wrote the essay that garnered my scholarship to college. My little brother and I started drifting apart.

In college every day held both unique challenges and consistent affirmation that I actually had a voice and a point of view that was valued. In between classes I could sit in

a tree and read assignments, or walk around the campus discussing concepts with fellow classmates. My wondering mind was finally finding synch with my wandering body. I know my little brother tried to follow me to college, but eventually he seemed to lose interest, by this time generally leaving me alone.

The year I graduated college a dear friend and mentor put a book in my hand and told me that one day I would be ready to come back to it. On the inside cover, the inscription read: "Hopefully this will aid and not distract you in establishing your spatiality as a thinker – remember, in all things trust your body." It took me ten years filled with graduate education and classroom teaching experiences for me to open that gift, but when I did, it was that book, *Phenomenology of Perception*, that brought me to this present moment. In the following pages, I want you as the reader to understand that there is still a specter lurking just at the periphery, always in the shadows. Please know, dear reader, that in this work I will not only be establishing a spatiality in relation to my thinking on attention, but that I will constantly be laboring under the knowledge that my little brother still exists, and will always be a tacit reminder of my journey to understand the wandering body and the wondering mind.

But even as I write this I realize that I don't really know him any more. You see, we had a bit of a falling out over this dissertation. We haven't spoken in a long time, and that is OK by me.

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CHAPTER I

APPROACHING THE REORIENTATION OF ATTENTION, EMBODIMENT, AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Attention: The Tacit Assumptions

Almost 13 billion dollars was spent on medicine for ADHD in 2013 in the United States (Whelan, 2015). Since I find really large numbers difficult to process independently, after learning this figure I sought a point of reference to better contextualize such a large number. I was shocked that as a country we typically spend less than that amount per year on antibiotics (Suda et al., 2013). While a strong argument can be made for the life saving properties of penicillin, it seems less likely to me that one could make the same argument for Ritalin or Strattera. And yet, here we are. In the words of Sir Ken Robinson, students are "being medicated as routinely as we had our tonsils taken out…[a]nd on the same whimsical basis and for the same reason – medical fashion" (Robinson, 2010). Clearly we have a powerful and profitable pharmaceutical industry here in the United States, and at the same time we have "a system of education that is modeled on the interests of industrialism and in the image of it" (Robinson, 2010). With the pressures of performance measures bearing down on teachers, administrators, students and parents alike, it is no surprise that "the incidence of ADHD has risen in

parallel with the growth of standardized testing" (Robinson, 2010). I believe that there is an epidemic here-but the epidemic is not a medical one, rather a philosophical one.

In the following pages and chapters I will be laying out a case of a philosophical reframing of attention, though it is also critical that we remember that attention is not simply an important concern philosophically – the sheer number of diagnoses and monies spent on treatments indicate something is terribly askew. To turn again to the words of Sir Ken Robinson, I fear he is indicating a frightening truth by suggesting "we're getting our children through education by anaesthetizing them (Robinson, 2010). It seems rather prescient then to reflect on exactly how attention came to be attended to in this manor, and therefore why we have apparently entered an attentional crisis mode here in the United States.

The theme of attention must have presented itself to me first during a parent teacher conference, quite probably, and certainly ironically, during a moment of reflective inattention[1]. I began to realize that all of my conferences had begun to sound the same, at least in reference to the language used. The conversations rarely revolved around specific skills, content deficits, or the parsed out data that might suggest where the student should focus their efforts. Rather, the conversations focused on meta-data, and generalizations concerning the cause of the poor performance. Almost always, it was noted that the student had trouble *paying attention*, and this would be posited without qualification or helpful explanation. To my wonder, explanation was rarely required, as

[1] The seemingly paradoxical nature of this phrase alone will become salient as I parse through attention and its interactions with consciousness in this and following chapters.

parents and teachers alike would nod heads in unison and agree that little Johnny[2] just needed to pay more attention, and little Johnny would nod back, agreeing that he should pay more attention, and with that the conference would end, leaving, at least in my mind, little resolved.

I began, after this point, to question some of the tacit assumptions inherent in the dialogs that I participated in during these conferences. The central question that presented itself during this time, and indeed the principle question guiding this study, is what attention actually is, how this might differ from how the term is often used, and what, if anything, attention has to do with learning. Certainly there was an assumption that attention must have quite a lot to do with learning, and yet I was not entirely sure. While I am not, per se, working toward a comprehensive and definitive definition for attention as it plays out in the classroom, the metaphysical and epistemological aspects of attentional structures do need to be fleshed out if we are to interrogate the current reified working notion of attention as used in many modern pedagogical contexts.

Methodologically, then, I will be proceeding in a non-empirical, philosophical fashion, working when possible within the phenomenological attitude, intending[3] attention as it is presented in lived experience. Beginning with a synthesis of the current

[2] I use 'Johnny' here not only as a play on the bestselling ADD book *Why Johnny Can't Concentrate*, but also to highlight the fact that, by and large, the conferences were predominately with boys, for reasons that will be addressed in chapter 4.

[3] In phenomenological language, to intend, or direct intention, is to consider an object (or in this case a concept) as it is presented before consciousness, bracketed out from whatever previous assumptions with which the object might be associated (Sokolowski, Introduction to Phenomenology, 2000).

ADHD[4] literature, I will admittedly be taking what one might consider a 'straw man' approach[5] by setting up the current body of popular ADHD work by notable writers such as Ratey & Hallowell, Sandra Reif, Thomas Brown and others, and juxtaposing collective general assumptions about attention with the phenomenological writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Further I will pair Merleau-Ponty with additional theorists in each chapter, which serve to enrich specific themes. These theorists include Wayne Wu, enriching the conceptual and psychological aspects of attention; Michel Foucault, who I will use to develop a notion of power as it relates to attention in chapter 2; Judith Butler and Jyl Lynn Felman, who's feminist theory will help to frame attention as it relates to preconceived notions of gender and gender performance; and Sarah Ahmed, whose queer phenomenology will serve as a guide for chapter four's exploration of the *queer* in attention. Through juxtaposing themes gleaned from these texts I hope to reveal some of the tacit assumptions made in the generalizations of attention throughout much of the ADD and ADHD research. A subsequent consideration of the philosophical and pedagogical implications of these assumptions will follow. As the chapters progress, I seek to imaginatively 'play' with these assumptions drawing on Sarah Ahmed as well as other contemporary educational theorists, with the end goal of achieving a queering, or reorientation of who we might consider *attention* philosophically.

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[4] I will use ADHD exclusively as the term ADD is typically no longer in use, as symptoms formerly prescribed to ADD are now rolled into the inattentive subtype of ADHD.

[5] I have drawn this approach from *Women Without* Class, by Jullie Bettie. Dr. Bettie uses the same 'straw man' setup using the bestseller *Reviving Ophelia* to play off her main arguments, though her general methodology was ethnography and mine non-empirical.

Consider this quote from a kindergartener's report card: "At times, he needs to be reminded to [pay attention to] the task at hand, as he tends to daydream" (Simon, 1992, p. 7). If we accept a common understanding of attention to mean "the mental faculty of considering or taking notice of someone or something," what precisely is happening in moments deemed deficits of attention, and what is the possibility of "the flexibility of attentional structures" (Oxford University Press, 2014; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 33).

Attention is a tricky thing. Part of why one must approach the topic of attention with caution is how casually the term is often used-this lack of specificity and deeper understanding is problematic. In our American vernacular we bandy about phrases like *paying attention*, *loosing attentio*n and having a *deficit of attention*, perhaps without clearly understanding what might be meant by these phrases and what their implications are. As pointed out by Monika Langer (1989) in her book *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: A Guide and Commentary*, we understand that "in the study of human behavior it becomes clear that the facts are ambiguous, that no experiment is decisive and no explanation final" (p. 45). With this in mind, I suggest that when approaching heavily reified[6] concepts such as attention, relying solely on

[6] Turning to phenomenological language, Robert Sokolowski reminds us that while "a whole can be called a *concretum*, something that can exist and present itself and be experienced as a concrete individual," there is a danger in intending a 'moment' of this concrete individual as a whole, as we might "begin to think that this moment can exist by itself, that it can become a *concretum*" (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 24). It is this philosophical quagmire, known as *reification*, that I belief might well be occurring in regards to attention. In other words, an individual is not reducible to a moment, and in doing this we commit an error of understanding.

traditionally empirical methodologies such as psychology and the biological sciences might not give the researcher as full a picture as possible of the phenomena.

That said, in developing a base of language on which to build, I will begin with a quick explication of the language in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV Text Revision (DSM IV TR)[7], as this will provide a foundation for building that 'straw man[8]' that will be interrogated further in subsequent chapters.

It is also worth noting that while the DSM IV TR goes into great detail identifying three subtypes of ADHD, allowing for predominately hyperactive, predominately inattentive, and the combined type, we will focus our time on the language related to inattention (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). The DSM-IV TR lays out the essential features of ADHD disorders as first and foremost a "persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequently displayed and is more severe than is typically observed in individuals at comparable level of development" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Note here the norm referenced nature of the diagnosis already, suggesting that there must be juxtaposition between the ADHD child's pattern of behaviors and *normal* children. Further, ADHD must show "interference with developmentally appropriate social, academic or occupational functioning" (American

[7] While we will be working with the language as laid out by DSM IV (text revision) since the criteria for ADD and ADHD did not change with the recent publication of DSM V, it is worth noting that the exclusion criteria for autism spectrum disorders was removed, allowing for comorbid diagnoses with the two disorders (DSM V). This and other comorbidities will come into play in later chapters as we consider the implications of pervasive comorbidities in ADD and ADHD diagnoses.

[8] This straw man here is a general synthesis/consensus of current ADHD research-I will position this straw man to be 'knocked down' by interrogating the philosophical assumptions behind much the current research.

Psychiatric Association, 2000). Consider the tacit language in the wording here, and it becomes clear that, while ADHD is not specifically classed as a learning disability, there is clearly an implication that academic performance in those diagnosed as ADHD would be thought to suffer.

While a working definition of attention is not given in the any of the DSMs to date, there is a rather interesting series of indicators of inattention, including when the student "fails to give close attention to details," has "difficulty sustaining attention in tasks," does "not seem to listen when spoken to directly," does "not follow through, "has "difficulty organizing," is "reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort," often "loses things," is "often distracted," and "often forgetful (Timimi & Leo, Introduction, 2009)." It is no Wonder, considering this list, that Timimi and Leo (2009), in their introduction to *Rethinking ADHD: from Brain to Culture*, point out that "[t}hose with a critical eye would have spotted difficult to define words such as 'often,' 'seems,' 'difficulties,' 'reluctant,' 'easily,' 'quietly,' and 'excessively,' that are used to describe ADHD symptoms. (p. 5). The final piece of language worth noting is in the section entitled 'prevalence:' while 3 to 7 percent of school age children are likely to present the required symptoms to diagnose, these rates are "dependent on population sampled and method of ascertainment" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). As we will begin to see, variations both within certain populations and from measure to measure allude to some ambiguity in exactly what constitutes attentional problems, which gives us food for thought as we begin to look at the synthesized research that has both stemmed from and led to the current wording of the DSM IV TR.

Attending To Themes Presented In Current ADHD Literature

During my research for this section, I stumbled onto a visual cue that encapsulates my reading of much of the relevant ADHD related literature. Pouring through classic bestsellers such as *Driven to Distraction* by Hallowell & Ratey, and *Why Johnny can't concentrate* by Robert Moss & Helen Huff Dunlap, as well as newer works such as Thomas Brown's *A New Understanding of ADHD in Children and Adults* and Sandra Rief's *The ADHD Checklist*, I was drawn to the covers of three books sprawled out beside each other on my living room floor, and the comic serendipity hit me square in the face- all three of the books that I was looking at had the identical front cover: a young, white boy in the process of throwing a paper airplane.[9] It struck me that, though there were a number of years between these various works, and many of them had titles that promised a new or reimagined understanding, that, as a body of work, thinking on ADHD, or at least its overt representations, have really changed very little over the last 25 years or so. It is with this lack of change in mind that we will begin to consider some dominant themes that emerge from these works as a body of literature. Central to this study is the theme of attention, inattention, and learning.

Attention, Inattention and Learning

It is clear in a significant amount of the extant ADHD literature that attention is deemed critical to learning, or that "children with attention deficit will inevitably experience some degree of difficulty in school due to their poor concentration" (Moss &

[9] The three titles were *Biographies of Disease: ADHD* (2009) by Paul Graves Hammerness, *Why Johnny can't concentrate* (1990) by Moss & Dunlap, and *(De) Constructing ADHD* (2010), edited by Linda Graham.

Dunlap, 1990, p. 17). The idea that "The ability to attend is critical to learning and to a person's well being" (Chekes-Julkowski, Sharp, & Stolzenburg, 1997, p. 6) is perhaps the first assumption made in ADHD research, hence the answer to the question of what is the big deal with ADHD is thus: that somehow learning is at compromised through attentional disorders.

While the language in the DSM, as well as that of federal guidelines still asserts that technically ADHD is not a learning disability, there are a number of caveats to this, one of the most obvious being the "The federal special education law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA) regulations that govern educational rights of children with disabilities refer to both ADD and ADHD among the "other health impairments" (Rief, 2008, p. 1). While this does not technically make ADHD a 'learning' disability, it affords those diagnosed the same rights and accommodations as those with learning disabilities. There also seems to be a clear indication in much of the literature that there is a belief that learning accommodations are needed in most cases, or "ADDs will affect learning in specific ways requiring specific instructional modifications (Chekes-Julkowski, Sharp, & Stolzenburg, 1997, p. 3).

The other common way that we can see connections being made between ADHD and learning disorders is in the description of comorbidities. In short, quantitative studies related to ADHD typically show that ADHD students often have other concurrent diagnoses, and that ADD/HD children are more likely than others to have a specific learning difficulty (Holowenko, 1999, p. 17). In fact, a study cited by Thomas Brown (2013) suggests that as many as 46.1% of ADHD students have comorbid learning

disorders, as "compared to 5.3 percent non-ADHD student who have learning disorders" (p. 131). Clearly these correlations are highlighted to draw attention to the connection between ADHD and learning difficulties, as Brown (2013) states when he argues that "research on comorbidity between ADHD and LD highlights the critical role of executive functions in learning and its disorders" (p. 140). Executive function, as pointed out in Brown's (2013) *A new Understanding of ADHD in Children and Adults* is "a developmental impairment of the management center of the brain," and an attempt to develop scientific/ biological evidence for ADHD (p. 21). Brown goes into more detail about executive functioning's link to learning when he argues

> Impairments of ability to focus and sustain attention, to engage with the task, and to utilize working memory are critical elements of being able to read, do math, and give written expression to thoughts. (p. 14)

What is unclear here, notably, is whether or not the impediment is in the learning of math, reading, and written expression, or in the execution of these tasks. What is clear, however, is that the structuring of ADHD language to include terms like executive functioning is an attempt by researchers to provide empirical justification for theories surrounding ADHD, as we will consider further in the next section.

ADHD: Scientific Justifications

While in this this study I do not specifically intend to deny the existence of ADHD, or other diagnostic labels for symptoms of attentional problems and hyperactivity, it is important to note that a theme running through the works examined is an apparent obsession over proving ADHD a biological condition, with empirical data to

justify its existence: “I did my best to offer the science that proved my point of view to be current-that ADD is a valid diagnosis, that its etiology is primarily genetic” (Hallowell & Ratey, 2011, p. xiv). This statement, a reflection by Hallowell from the mid 1990s, is still very much present today, despite repeated claims that the view is new, reimagined, non-traditional or innovative. Consider the following quote from *Rethinking attention deficit disorders* (1997): “whereas the traditional view of ADDs includes them under behavioral disorders, the view presented here sees them as dynamic interactions of behavior, cognition, and affect” (Chekes-Julkowski, Sharp, & Stolzenburg, 1997, p. 4). Notice the language suggests a contrast between a ‘traditional’ behavioral view and the new ‘dynamic’ cognitive model. Hallowell, in the 2011 re-release of the classic *Driven to Distraction* responds similarly:

> Science uncovered more and more evidence, from imaging studies to genetic studies to family studies, proving that ADD was a true biological entity. Furthermore, ongoing studies proved that, if undiagnosed and untreated, ADD can cause severe impairment (p. xv).

We can see the almost urgent emphasis on the biological evidence here, apparent in the use of the phrase ‘more and more,’ as if the science is absolutely crucial in establishing the relevance of ADHD. Thomas Brown (2013) continues in this trend in his rather ironically titled *A New Understanding of ADHD*:

> Central to this new understanding of ADHD is the notion that this is not a disorder of behavior, but a developmental impairment of the management system of the brain-its executive functions. (p. 21)

In this *new understanding* much might be said to remain the same, particularly considering that Brown himself noted that George Still described symptoms mirroring today's ADHD symptoms as early as 1902 (p. 55). Also in this 'new understanding,' Brown (2013) argues for the use of stimulant medication, claiming "Children treated with stimulant medication had higher scores for reading and lower rates of absenteeism when compared to students with ADHD who were not treated with medication" (p. 13). The humor again might be found in the fact that stimulant medication treatments have been recorded as far back as 1932 (Lange, Reichl, Lange, Tucha, & Tucha, 2010). Certainly biological evidence was being mustered in the relatively early days of ADD/HD research, as referenced in the classic *Why Johnny can't Concentrate* by Robert Moss (1990): "People who have attention deficit do not seem to manufacture extra neurotransmitters. All messages come in at once with equal velocity." (p. 16).

There is, it should be noted, also a decent amount of literature that questions many of the empirical assertions regarding ADHD, from the argument that "stimulant medications do not improve learning per se" (Furman, 2009, p. 37) to the overarching point that "brain functioning is more complex than the ADHD conceptualization would have us believe" (Jureidini, 2009, p. 349).

One of the more disturbing suggestions is that the supremacy of biological data driven assertions might lead those with alternative views to be marginalized within the community of ADHD research: "clinical psychologists and other professionals find themselves ignored and insulted by colleagues on a regular basis for questioning virtually any practice (diagnosis, the use of medication and other physical interventions) that

conforms to Foucault's conception of the gaze (Newnes, 2009, p. 163). A final point here should be that, frankly, there has been no final point on the scientific justification of ADHD, even down to the assertions regarding executive functioning: "Self-regulation is a more complex concept than executive function" (Jureidini, 2009, p. 358). It is on this rather fitting open-ended note that we transition to a third theme, the ambiguity of the language associated with the description of ADHD.

The Ambiguous Nature of ADHD Language

While certainly there are a number of critical viewpoints in relation to the ambiguity of ADHD diagnosis and labeling, and we will consider several of these in this section, it is important to note that one can find a good number of ambiguous statements about attributes of ADHD in the pro ADHD research, and to read them with a critical eye is somewhat telling. While I will not spend a great deal of time here discussing diagnostic criteria, as this was considered in a previous section, it is useful to point out that diagnosis typically consists of a checklist of symptoms, varying slightly though usually retaining at least some of the criteria found in the DSM. It is also worth pointing out that while "the diagnosis of ADHD is built on a checklist of subjective symptoms, there is no objective diagnostic test and no identified cause for the condition" (Furman, 2009, p. 21). With that in mind, listed symptoms include, but are not limited to: inconstancy, creativity, provocative behavior, winning personality, varying motivation, exasperating forgetfulness, disorganization and indifference, underachievement, impulsivity, and the search for excitement rather than discipline, impulsivity, free flight of ideas, difficult feeling satisfied, high activity level, social immaturity, mood swings,

performance inconsistency, memory dysfunction, and acting without thinking (Hallowell & Ratey, 2011, p. 80; Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 1; Chekes-Julkowski, Sharp, & Stolzenburg, 1997, p. 1). The most compelling aspect to these symptoms is, it seems, their universality, but also their difficulty to pinpoint. If one has spent a significant amount of time around adolescents or children, one probably sees many of the above symptoms as pervasive. This leads even those who believe in the diagnosis to warn that one of the most common errors "in the diagnostic process …is overcalling ADD, seeing it everywhere" (Hallowell & Ratey, 2011, p. 52).

Another interesting observation is that many of these attributes occur on a sliding scale, and are typically noted in reference to whatever the group norms might be, as pointed out by Hallowell and Ratey (2011):

> There is no clear line of demarcation between ADD and normal behavior. Rather one must make a judgment based on a comparison of the individual child to his or her peer group (p. 51).

Certainly, the one artist in a room of accountants will stand out in contrast, but perhaps in a room of musicians, not so much. If context is critical, then, and context shifts, perhaps there is a subjective nature to diagnosis of the disorder, or at least inconsistency.[10] Timimi and Leo (2009) point out that commonly cited ADHD symptoms such as

[10] Context will become a theme in subsequent chapters as well. The concern here is not so much that diagnosticians should take context into account, but the very notion that a disorder is really only observable in relation to a standard set of norms for an individual's peer group – in short the concern with context becomes that ADHD begins to become delineated along lines of race class and gender – attentional deficits in relation to *other* poor kids, black kids, and boys, etc.…

"Hyperactivity, impulsivity and poor concentration are behaviors that occur on a continuum. All children…will present with such behavior in some settings at some point" (p. 5). Timimi and Leo (2009) also cite that "over activity, poor concentration and impulsivity in children were first conceptualized as medical phenomena in the early years of the last century" (p. 1). Perhaps the most important word in this quote is 'conceptualized.' To be conceptualized suggested that before these behaviors were criteria for diagnosis, they were simply attributes of a person's personality.

While diagnostic checklists are critical in the process, it would be foolish to ignore student performance data as a driving factor in ADHD diagnosis:

> An evaluator should have at least a general indication of a child's academic achievement levels and performance, as well as a rough estimate of his or her cognitive (thinking and reasoning) ability. This can partly be determined through a review of the student's report cards, standardized test scores, classroom work samples, informal screening measures, and reports from the teacher, parents, or student. (Rief, 2008, p. 30)

This is compelling for multiple reasons, but the primary area for our concern is attention and learning, so it seems difficult to ignore the tacit assumption that 'cognitive' ability would correlate to an ADHD diagnosis. Granted, it is left ambiguous as to what the evaluator will do with that data, as there are no ADHD diagnostic criteria that directly relate to data on cognitive ability. One might imagine that sporadic performance and inconsistency in grades might be an indicator, but these are not related to *cognitive ability*, so it seems again that there is a tacit assumption that attentional concerns are somehow, but in a poorly defined way, related to learning, some of the disconnect, it

seems, might come from the fact that, while in an effort to describe what is arguably a cognitive disorder, the ambiguous language often used to describe the disorder focuses more on visual evidences than anything that might directly suggest cognitive processing concerns. This positions us to consider the primacy of the visual[11] as the next theme developed in our consideration of ADHD research.

Primacy of the Visual

> Consider the following set of questions:
>
> Is your child easily distracted, disorganized, impulsive, and hard to satisfy? Is he or she temperamental, fidget…Does the teacher say that your child can't sit still…or tends to daydream a lot? (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 1)

Aside from sounding vaguely like an infomercial, one develops a very clear mental picture of the child that might have these symptoms. There is no data presented about the cognitive functioning or potential thought processes of the child, rather a list of visual cues for 'spotting' ADHD. In fact, the first 'signs' of ADHD generally seem to be visual in nature. Certainly there are diagnostic procedures that take other factors into account, but what, by and large, actually gets marketed to most parents is a set of visual indicators of ADHD, and these, as we will begin to see, are potentially problematic. The problem of the visual in relation to attention is two fold. The first, is that it might in fact not be possible to measure attention using visual indicators, as there might not be any substantial visual correlate to the process of attending, despite assertions that "Directly observing the

[11] The phrase 'primacy of the visual' developed out of a dialog between Dr. Glenn Hudak and myself in the fall of 2014.

child's functioning in a variety of settings can provide helpful diagnostic information" (Rief, 2008, p. 29).

The second point is the fact that one might be *in attention* even without looking directly at the object being attended. This is problematic in that it assumes a preclusion of any other possibility for attention to occur other than with visual contact by the attendee. While we will explore the philosophical and cognitive implications of this view of attention later, it is sufficient at this point to point out that the expectation of visual attention seems a tacit assumption in the quest for attention from an individual. Consider that Sandra Rief (2008) in *The ADD/ADHD Checklist* suggested that teachers "[u]se visual signals such as flashing the lights or raising your hand, which signals the students to raise their hands and stop talking until everyone is silent and attentive " (p. 137). Here is also the tacit assumption that silence is a required signal that a student is attentive, while the visual cue of flashing lights and raising hands is meant to be seen as a universal way to obtain attention, yet it relies primarily on visual stimuli to gain students attention, and relies on visual cues to ensure that students have that attention. What might be at stake here by ignoring other attentional stimuli, and for that matter other potential cues for attention? Rief (2008) goes on to point out best practices for maintaining attention, suggesting that teachers "(u)se pictures and other graphics, gestures, manipulatives, and other interesting visuals to engage students' attention and interest" (p. 137). What then does it mean for the student that does not respond to these particular visual cues? Is this an automatic sign of inattention? If so then it seems perhaps a limiting and superficial understanding of attentional behaviors and processes. It also becomes problematic in

practice, as certain visual cues tacitly associated with attention become markers for a disorder of attention, when there might possibly be only a two dimensional understanding of the attentional structures at play. Consider that:

> it is interesting to note that most of the preschoolers I see with attention deficit are hyperactive. These hyperactive preschoolers are probably the easiest children with attention difficulties to diagnose because they have obvious symptoms. (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 10)

This quote implies a number of points, admittedly one is that some individuals require more effort than others to diagnose, but the assumption that some individuals, namely energetic young children, are *easy* to identify as having attentional problems seems somewhat reaching, or at least over generalized. Sense of overgeneralization that will be tackled as the next theme my review of relevant ADHD research.

Un-embodied Attention: The Generic Nature of ADHD

This section might well be characterized by what is missing in much of the current ADHD research rather than what is present. What much of the current research is missing, it would seem, is any real sense of the embodied nature of attention. In short, attention, whether an event, action, or process, occurs in embodied subjects. There has to be a subject that does the intending, and these subjects have attributes that distinguish them in a number of potentially salient ways. What we see in the ADHD literature examined clearly a description of bodiless beings that behave in a certain way, and therefore must have a particular disorder. The descriptions are, by and large totally

generic[12]. This assertion can be substantiated be Newnes (2009): "children do not develop in a vacuum…[the] critique of the diagnostic tendency focuses on ADHD and challenges clinical psychologists to rediscover environment and context as a key to understanding any conduct" (p. 164). Certainly, if you dig you can find a few articles that consider ADHD along more specific lens of inquiry, such as Ohan's (2009) "Why is there a Gender Gap in Children Presenting For Attention Deficit/Hyperactive." However, by and large, the landscape (in the broader ADHD literature examined) is whitewashed, virtually free of discussion regarding race, class or gender. Do not take this to mean that I suggest there ought to be chapters devoted to black kids, poor kids and girls, rather it seems that there is a general omission of a salient fact: we all have a race, a class distinction, and a gender distinction, however complex and nuanced these distinctions may be. Sociological distinctions in relation to these differences are salient to the discussion, as these behaviors being presented are occurring in fully formed individuals with relevant specificities in relation to communication, bodily positionality, and social construction. While it is not specifically within the scope of this study to fully flesh out these complex differences, it would be remiss not to consider fully the implications of ignoring them completely.

Consider just one of the rare mentions of gender in Sandra Rief's (2008) work on ADHD:

[12] I must admit culpability here as well. It was in comp defense of a historiography on ADHD that Dr. Lelia Villaverde pointed out that my research seemed rather devoid of the whole child, focusing on behaviors without considering elements of race, class, and gender.

> Girls who do have the combined type of ADHD with hyperactivity are very recognizable because their behavior is significantly out of norm compared to other girls their age. (p. 24)

What is the 'norm' of other girls? How do these norms develop a context for ADHD to present differently? Why is this the case, and what does this mean for ADHD embodied by the female subject, and how is this different from ADHD embodied by the male subject. Does sex role differ from gender role here? What might be at stake for the male to female transgendered person; for the female to male trans gendered person? For the gender queer individual? While any of these questions might make a powerful sociological study independently, considered together they make one pause about the direction and timbre of the ADHD research considered.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect encountered is the use of what might be characterized as throwaway comments in respect to *diversity*:

> Teachers who have the most success in engaging their students are those who are skilled in the art of questioning. They know how to design instruction and provide high student response opportunities, accountability, critical and divergent thinking, and active participation, with everyone having a voice that is heard and respected. (p. 141)

The phrase *everyone having a voice and being respected* might be an interesting jumping off point for a discussion of the idea of everyone, but as a statement in isolation it serves only to reinforce the fact that:

> Studies have failed to control for potentially critical confounders known to affect brain imaging results, including prior or current medication use, gender, pre- and perinatal complications, and comorbidities such as depression, and that almost all

> studies in children have been underpowered, many using sample sizes of twenty or fewer. (Furman, 2009, p. 25)

We can see here that the cycle begins with research, and continues into the application of research data to the academy. Homogenous samples lead to homogenous conclusions, which are applied in a homogenous fashion to heterogeneous populations of students. It does not seem, frankly, a recipe for a successful identification of students with attentional concerns, in fact it throws the whole consideration of attentional concerns in doubt from the very onset.

Aside from gender, the context of class is also often forgotten, especially when pointed out that:

> Working class kids face a much higher probability of experiencing the symptoms of mental disorder in all its forms than their peers in middle class homes; hyperkinetic disorder is no exception. (Hart & Benassaya, 2009, p. 231)

Clearly this is a correlation that matters tremendously to the conceptualization of attention. If kids from working class environments are presenting ADHD symptoms at a higher rate, how does the biological causation or the executive functioning argument apply? Are working class kids biologically predisposed to ADHD? This seems unlikely, and therefore it might be possible that there are other factors contributing to diagnosis that might in fact be environmental. We might wonder if in fact these environmental factors actually have anything to do with attention at all? Is it sound to assign a distinction to a student that they have a disorder causing distraction if their environment

is inherently more distracting? These issues ought to be considered in regard to developing a fuller phenomenological picture of attention.

Race, racial identity, and culture might also be seen as lacking in the rather generic presentation of data found in the reviewed research. Consider the assertion that there is a:

> [T]o and fro movement of ideas about childhood behaviors, whether or not these are considered problematic, by whom, how responsibility is attributed, and the relationships between public and professional systems of attribution…[C]ulture is central to these systems of exchange. In this discussion culture is not limited to futile attempts to pin down 'ethnic identities,' … but includes considerations of dominant ideologies local and distant, …or the impact of cultural beliefs about selfhood on parental and professional attributes towards childcare. (Timimi & Maitra, 2009, p. 200)

Again, it is in the best interest of developing a clearer understanding of attention and attentional structures and their relationship to learning not to ignore the fully embodied subjects that are attending, and this includes ethnic and racial identities, as well as gender and class. The overarching message presented in a generic presentation of attentional issues is that the individual does not really matter, that perhaps attentional problems are being used to perpetuate systems of power, and this brings us to the final theme gleaned from the ADHD research review, and that is the theme of control and power, namely power of the phenomenon often referred to as the attention span.

Attention Span, Power, and Control

Whether phrased as "they will have trouble listening to lengthy instructions or lectures" or "due to their inattention and distractibility, students with ADHD often have

significant difficulty remaining focused and productive during seat work," or that these students have trouble "sustaining effort, utilizing working memory and modulating emotions that chronically impair their ability to manage necessary tasks of daily life," it is apparent that there is an emphasis on a long-term desire to develop compliance among students, and students deemed to have attentional problems, or behaviors associated with ADHD are not working within a time frame deemed as appropriate by systems of power (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 17; Rief, 2008, p. 144; Brown, 2013, p. 19).

In fact, coercion and power are themes that crop up again and again, as when it is suggested that "[c]hildren with ADHD require more external motivation" (Rief, 2008, p. 45), or "recognition of how much of this ability is in our conscious control and how much is subconscious is at the heart of understanding many of the characteristics of attention deficit" (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 14). If, as Moss suggests, students lack control, then the implied assumption is that control must be imposed upon them. Reif (2008) argues that the teacher should "[a]ddress inappropriate behavior when scanning by signaling, giving a gentle reminder or warning, or giving the student "the teacher look" (Rief, 2008, p. 116).

What is this teacher look? And what does it mean for students deemed to have attentional problems? Does it mean that they need to be reminded where the power lies in the classroom? Is span of attention about a student's cognitive or biological ability to sustain focus, or more about the teacher's desire to manage a student's time? This further complicates attention when now it seems that the answer to a supposedly biological or

cognitive disorder is to "Impose the necessary structure" (Rief, 2008, p. 113). It seems, rather, that, as Jureidini (2009) points out:

> Behavior should be understood before it is managed. Children who present with behavior problems are often prone to unregulated displays of affect, in particular angry outbursts or tantrums. It is common for others to respond to such angry behaviors in an antagonistic way. (Jureidini, 2009, p. 355)

We will consider power and spans of attention more fully in chapter 4, but for now it is sufficient to leave this as a concern that ought to be fully considered when fleshing out whether attention is impacting learning, or attention is impacting systems of power, or indeed, if both might exist simultaneously. At this point, in order to begin to consider these themes that may have arisen in our review of some of the relevant ADHD literature as philosophical aspects of attention, we will transition from the literature of ADHD and work our way to a closer philosophical treatment of attention and attentional structures, with an aim at teasing out some of the tacit philosophical assumptions that lay in the current thinking on attention.

Attention as the Keeper of the Gate of Consciousness

I will start with an explicit illustration of one of the central tacit assumptions in relation to attention. William James, one of the founding fathers of psychology, famously noted that:

> Everyone knows what attention is. It is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence. (James, as cited in Wu, 2014, p. 3)

This quote is monumental[13], in that it sets the scene for the one of the longest running reifications in modern psychology, and that is the tacit assumptions behind the notion of attention. The problem here is that, still in the light of the 21st century, *everyone* still seems to think that they *know* what attention is. In this section, I trouble the waters by suggesting, with some hubris, that perhaps 'everyone' in fact does not know what attention is. James' 'taking possession by the mind' leads to a very problematic stance-wherein the mind's consciousness is held almost at ransom by attention. If this is true, then attention truly is a feature that is central to learning. What it also means if it holds true, however, is that consciousness is always tied directly to attention, and that objects are attended inward and these objects direct consciousness completely, as opposed to consciousness being directed outward, which is a view that we will consider in the next section.

In beginning to parse this out, I will be referring to the work of philosopher and psychologist Henry Wu, specifically to his 2014 work entitled simply *Attention*. In this book, Wu weaves empirical psychological data with a savvy use of phenomenology to really uncover some of the tacit philosophical assumptions of attention implicit in the psychological studies that much of the ADHD research is based around. These assumptions will lay a strong groundwork for the philosophical analysis that will follow. Wu (2014) warns early on that while

[13] This is an important quote and one that bears considering further as it has a long legacy – for this reason we will return to this idea again in the concluding chapter, as a bit of a bookend.

> [t]here can be no simple theory of attention, any more than there can be a simple theory of thought….there is still a question about what unifies the members of each subfamily of attention, and for each, a different version of the metaphysical question can be formulated. So we cannot fully escape the question of metaphysics (p. 7).

In our brief exploration here of the metaphysics of attention[14], we will consider specifically one of the many questions that Wu poses, namely "What is the relationship between attention and consciousness" (p. 7)? While Wu systematically lays out a number of possibilities and critically evaluates them, the central theory put forth here for further investigation (and eventually critique), is that of the 'gatekeeper hypothesis. Simply put, this theory states that:

> S is conscious of X if and only if S attends to X…This model provides a different answer to the metaphysical question: attention is a selective process that is *for consciousness*. In other words, attention is identified by its distinctive functional link to consciousness. (Wu, 2014, p. 147)

Therefore, one might conclude that if there is no attention, there can be no consciousness of an object. This would certainly put attention at a high priority, and deem deficits of attention, essentially as deficits of cognitive thought. This surely implies, if gatekeeping holds true, a concrete link between attention and learning, in *all* forms.

In order to further consider gatekeeping, we should first consider two main forms in which one might be conscious of something. First, if my attention is directed toward an object, I become conscious of that object. Wu refers to this as access attention,

[14] The epistemology of attention is relevant as well, and will be considered in subsequent chapters, particularly is it relates to cognition and belief.

referred to henceforth as a-consciousness. When in a-consciousness, however, I might also be conscious of other things simultaneously, not in a direct form of attention. Wu suggests, with this in mind, that there might be a second type of consciousness, one that is aware in a secondary or indirect sense. Wu refers to this as phenomenal consciousness, henceforth p-consciousness (Wu, 2014, p. 178).

Being aware of this distinction, let us return to a more specific description of gatekeeping, where we see a pivotal point emerge:

> Attention [serves] as a gatekeeper for consciousness. Specifically…one is phenomenally conscious of X only if one attends to X. …The experimental evidence…falls short of settling this matter, but more importantly, much conceptual work remains to be done. (Wu, 2014, p. 9)

This is a significant argument, and one that truly deserves consideration. In fact, it will truly serve as a key to understanding much of what is currently assumed in our current understandings of attention and attentional problems. If this statement holds true, then not only is attention necessary for consciousness, it is necessary for thinking itself. However, if this is not *always* true, then perhaps too much is made of attention.[15] Specifically, if gatekeeping holds true, I must be in attention to be even phenomenally conscious of a thing.

Two important ideas deserve consideration at this point. First, the quote suggests that gatekeeping argues that *phenomenal* consciousness requires attention. This is

[15] We will speak more on this in subsequent chapters, but for now it is enough to suggest that the pedagogical significance of attention seems predicated at least somewhat on its being the gatekeeper to consciousness.

important because p-consciousness is any secondary or tertiary awareness of an object or phenomenon without directly attending to it. Consider the text that you are reading at this current moment. Perhaps it is in the form of a physical piece of paper, or on a computer screen or tablet. Until the moment that you read the previous sentence, you were likely not directly thinking about the physical object holding the words that you were reading. You were directly attending to the words, or ideas presented in the text, but not directly attending to the object holding the text most likely, at least not until this object was pointed out. You were, however, *phenomenally* conscious of the object, as, if asked later, you easily recall the object that you were handling. It is in the context of this reflection that we might consider p-consciousness. To put it another way:

> Suppose that you are engaged in intense conversation when suddenly at noon you realize that right outside your window, there is-and has been for some time -- a pneumatic drill digging up the street. You were aware of the noise all along, one might say, but only at noon are you consciously aware of it. That is, P-conscious of the noise all along, but at noon you are both p-conscious and a-conscious of it. (Block cited in Wu, 2014, p. 178).

So if gatekeeping holds true, does this mean that p-consciousness is directly linked to attention? This would imply that all objects at any point brought forth in consciousness must be deemed as being 'paid attention to. One could infer, then, that a deficit of attention is, therefore, a deficit in thought, and in all cases a hindrance to learning.

The second point, however, is one that will tie into the central concern in this study -- this is that experimental evidence does not necessarily prove gatekeeping true in all cases (Wu, 2014). While the scope of this study does not aim to prove or disprove

gatekeeping using empirical evidence, the implications raised in doubting this hypothesis will be fleshed out in significant detail in subsequent chapters. The important point to consider here is that it doesn't matter if gatekeeping always holds true, rather that if at any time it does not, it provides a basis on which to question the basis of many attentional suppositions.

In the subsequent chapters, we will be unfolding a picture of how (a) the gatekeeping theory might not always hold true, and (b) the metaphysical and epistemological arguments that support the fact that gatekeeping might not always hold true. Here, however I will posit one of Wu's conceptual scenarios in which attention is not the sole gatekeeper of consciousness. We should first consider the following suppositions:

> A. If S is conscious of object O, then S attends to O
> B. If S is conscious of object O, then S attends to (some) feature F of O
> C. If S is conscious of object O, then S attends to location L of O. (Wu, 2014, p. 149)

Notice first that consciousness is, in this case prepositioned before attention -- if consciousness then attention -- not the other way around. The first statement does directly link attention and consciousness, albeit with conscious being the conditional. It is the second and third statements that are compelling, however, with the suggestion being that consciousness might be conscious of an object in entirety, but attentive to a specific aspect, of or related to the object. To give slightly more detail to this conceptualization, consider the possibility of an attention free 'gist of a situation or

object, or "attention free awareness" (Wu, 2014, p. 164). Wu cites a study by Olivia that suggests that this attention free awareness is "Spatial representation of the outside world that is rich enough to grasp the meaning of the scene (Olivia cited in Wu, 2014, p. 164). This goes past simply being aware of surroundings in a flippant sense, however, because this awareness "includes all levels of processing, from low level features…to intermediate image properties…and high level information"(Olivia, cited in Wu, 2014, p. 164). This means that attention free awareness involves consciousness; more specifically that consciousness is producing meaning from that which it is aware, but not specifically in attention to. Just think for a moment about the sheer amount knowledge that would be produced in this way – certainly knowledge enough to produce variables that question attentional correlations in specific learning experiences. In this awareness, one might gain a richness of experience without attention at all, suggesting that thought about an object or situation might occur outside of attention and contribute to meaning, or that ultimately "some aspects of consciousness are not determined by attention" (Wu, 2014, p. 172).

Wu's arguments, by his own admission, rely largely on empirical psychological research. For this reason, Wu leaves a significant amount of unanswered questions, namely whether or not gatekeeping does hold true in all contexts. While Wu's approach is useful in setting up the nature of the concern, and explicating the structure of the arguments at stake, to fully examine attention philosophically, I will turn to the work of French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty to posit a contrasting view of attention through a phenomenological lens, and draw from a number of further philosophical and

literary examples to enrich and develop this contrasting view by using Merleau-Ponty to free attention from a linear purely cognitive gatekeeping model, and position it phenomenologically in living bodies.

Embodiment and a Reorientation of Attention

In this section, I will introduce Merleau-Ponty's general arguments relating to attention, in the view of setting groundwork for deeper subsequent analysis in following chapters. Merleau-Ponty is appropriate in this discussion not only because he developed a comprehensive phenomenology of attention, consciousness, and perception, but also because he speaks to the embodied nature of attention, which brings us back to real bodies in the world, not simply abstract mental models.

This section will ultimately serve as a brief introduction to (a) some of the potential shortcomings of the gatekeeping model and (b) how a more embodied multidimensional view of attention might be used as the basis to enrich our understanding of attention, and by extension perhaps *queer*[16] our current popular understandings of attention and deficits of attention.

Merleau-Ponty (2012) begins in his first part of *Phenomenology of perception* with a refreshing explanation of attention by suggesting that, perhaps too much is made of attention, pointing out that attention is an "abstract and ineffective power, for …it has no role to play" (p. 30). While this in itself doesn't mean attention can't be the

[16] Consider the notion of orientation here-think of the linear, or 'straight' model of gatekeeping, i.e. attention stands in front of consciousness, then imagine a queered, or blurred non-linear model of attention where attentional aspects might be present in various forms, and in multiple directions. Merleau-Ponty's embodied attention will help us to begin to conceive of such a model.

gatekeeper to consciousness, it does suggest that attention develops no real meaning in consciousness. Merleau-Ponty (2012) further posits, "attention, then, is a general and unconditioned power in the sense that it can at any moment indifferently cast its light upon any of the contents of consciousness" (p. 29). This indifference of attention toward the meaning created by consciousness certainly calls into question the general power of attention, and certainly troubles the notion that attention might hold any power over consciousness. The words general and unconditioned actually allude to their being no conscious meaning making involved with attention at all. In fact, Merleau-Ponty seems to imply that consciousness holds significant content that might not be being attended to at any given time, yet consciousness is still making meaning without attention.

Merleau-Ponty (2012) furthers his point by challenging traditional empirical claims that attention can be shown to hold any power at all over consciousness: "nowhere can attention be interested" (p. 29). Merleau-Ponty (2012) further points out that a relationship between attention and consciousness has not been empirically verified on an internal level, only externally – this then leads to the central limitation of empiricism for him: "empiricism has only external connections at its disposal" (p. 29). Merleau-Ponty introduces the important notion of perception, and this idea seems to play into attention significantly. Up until now, we have been considering in fairly general terms how attention and consciousness might be connected. With the introduction of perception, however, Merleau-Ponty adds an important aspect that has been missing in previous discussions of attention, and that is the power of perception to awaken attention. Perception becomes a far more holistic notion than attention in this context, as we can

imagine perception in multiple cognitive and physical modalities; Perception is a fully embodied notion, while attention, as it is typically considered, seems a mental or cognitive act.

It is this notion of embodiment where Merleau-Ponty departs from other thinkers on the subject of attention. As previously pointed out, there is a general lack of recognition that attention is embodied in beings – beings with unique positionalities. I direct us back to the generic sense of much of the literature on ADHD (i.e. catch all descriptions that mention *context*, but miss the complexities of how an individual's consciousness develops meaning). What seems to be lacking is the acknowledgement that we are refereeing to embodied subjects, not simply mental processes that can be empirically measured.

Merleau-Ponty (2012), starting with a clear phenomenological truth, points out "I believe I am surrounded by my body, caught up in the world, and situated here and now (p. 39). This technique that Merleau-Ponty employs here, of starting with a truth common to lived experience, is a cornerstone in developing a phenomenological argument. If we can all agree that his statement is true, then we might proceed forward with his description of attention and consciousness, now with the understanding that embodied consciousness in the world might reshape our understanding of the experience of attention, or what might in fact be possible without attention at all.

If we start with the body, and consider what we might know from an embodied perspective, we might see that perhaps learning can occur outside of a traditional notion of attention, one that Merleau-Ponty (2012) describes as "a spotlight illuminating

preexisting objects hidden in the shadows" (p. 28). This image conjures up a very visual and linear notion of attention, and somewhat ignores what might be perceived or learned in other fashions. Mealeau-Ponty (2012) elucidates that:

> Perception becomes an "interpretation" of the signs that sensibility provides in accordance with bodily stimuli; it becomes an "hypothesis" made by the mind in order to "explain to itself its own impressions." And yet, rather than being the act of perceiving itself grasped from the inside by an authentic reflection, judgment – which was introduced in order to explain the excess of perception over the retinal impressions – itself becomes a mere "factor" of perception charged with the task of providing what is not provided by the body; rather than being a transcendental activity, it becomes a mere logical activity of reaching a conclusion. (p. 33)

This paragraph sums up at least one aspect of the complex interconnectedness that is embodied consciousness. If Merleau-Ponty's thoughts are correct here, then our perception and judgment act together with bodily stimuli to create meaning (i.e. thinking and learning), and this process seems to be able to exist outside of what we might see as traditional attentional structures. Attention, in this conceptualization, is a gatekeeper for neither learning nor consciousness. This conceptualization spurs a question that opens up a whole new set of possibilities in the space of attention and learning: How we might intend learning and attention in relation to processes that might not 'look like' traditional attentional structures? To quote Marjorie O'Loughlin (2013) "[i]t seems to me that returning the notion of embodiment to center stage is crucial for education (p. 21-22).

Reflecting on the embodiment, Judgment and perception as outlined by Merleau-Ponty, it seems these three ideas together serve as a three dimensional notion of consciousness projected into the world, as opposed to the linear idea of attention being

directed inward as a gatekeeper to consciousness. It makes me reflect on an excerpt from the book Ender's Game, by Orson Scot Card. In this passage Ender, the brilliant young protagonist, encounters a zero-gravity experience in a space shuttle for the first time, and subsequently experiences a compelling sense of this three dimensional notion of consciousness:

> But because he had already reoriented himself, he was not surprised when Graff came up the ladder backward, as if he were climbing down to the front of the shuttle. …The reorientations were too much for some. One boy gagged…But for Ender, Graff's gravity game was fun, And he carried it further, imagining that Graff was actually hanging upside down from the center aisle… Gravity could go any which way. However I want it to go. I can make Graff stand on his head and he doesn't even know it. (Card, 1991, p. 31)

With this beautifully crafted metaphor we can now transition to new possibilities for articulating Merleau-Ponty's conception of attention. Sarah Ahmed (2006) in her article "Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology," suggests that "orientations are about how we begin, how we proceed from here" (p. 545). What if we considered attention from an angle of orientation? Perhaps we might disclose a different perspective with which to view attention, a queering of attentional moments, perhaps[17]. Ahmed earlier states that "[p]henomenology, after all, is full of queer moments…Maurice Merleau-Ponty gives an account of how these moments are overcome, as bodies are reoriented in the "becoming vertical" of perspective (Ahmed, 2006, p. 544). Supposing we could use this 'queering' to see attention in terms of this three dimensional orientation, what might

[17] In the same say that Ender was able to understand up and down as orientations that are movable, how might we apply this to attention, and question how our orientations might allow us to play with attention in the same spirit that ender played with gravity.

the implications for this reoriented attention be? In his article "The Sphere of Attention, context and margin" P. Sven Arvidson claims that "attention can only be properly researched once it is understood to be the center of a sphere of attention, a process that presents content in three dimensions, not one (Arvidson, 2006, p. 2).

Is it possible then that popular views of ADHD are predicated on limited understandings? This three dimensional process could have significant implications for the diagnostic model of ADHD, responses to ADHD, and even the nature of its classification as a disorder as well as pedagogical implications for how to approach attentional concerns in the classroom. We will develop this three dimensionality in attention in more detail in the following chapters, with a view to considering different possibilities in the interaction between attention and learning. At the nexus of attention and learning we will encounter power, gender, and sexuality, and each of these will enrich our understanding of the most basic of connections, attention and consciousness.

The Chapters

In chapter two, "Objectification and Power: Physical Bodies at Attention," the work of Michel Foucault and Zygmunt Bauman becomes our conceptual roadmap as we consider potential philosophical connections between attention and power. It is in this chapter that I will first introduce the possibility that one of the major pitfalls to our current approaches to attention is a misunderstanding of the relationship between the mind and the body – and by extension this misunderstanding allows power structures to treat bodies as objects.

I trouble again this notion of the primacy of the visual again in chapter three, but this time with an emphasis on attention and the reading and performance of gender in "Presentation, Performance, and Participation: Reading Gender in Attention." Here I am interested in how the reading and performance of gender play into the way that attention is commonly 'measured' in the classroom. There is a primacy of the visual that favors certain gendered performance and in challenging these performances students are often labeled as having deficits of attention based on generic indicators and checklists. Further, the philosophical conceptualization of a body-as-subject versus a body-as-object will be furthered in this chapter.

What if we create straight spaces where that which presents as non-straight is deemed queer? Chapter four develops a phenomenological queering of attention through a blurring of binary thinking in relation to (a) attention and inattention and (b) The subject/object binary developed through chapters two and three. Principally I will use a queer phenomenological framework as developed by Sarah Ahmed to suggest that to see attention as queer might call in to question our ability to even know if and when attention is actually occurring.

The concluding chapter will revisit the key arguments of the study, reasserting that much of the ADHD literature relies on tacit assumptions founded on the gatekeeping hypotheses, and that these assumptions might lead to a limited conceptualization of attention. Next we will explore a description of a multidimensional queering of attention, and consider its implications on the future of theory and practice in relation ADHD and learning. Finally, the following questions and their implications will be explored. If our

current thinking on attention is in fact flawed, how might many of our standard classroom practices be missing the mark? How might our whitewashed or generic view of attention be further marginalizing students? These questions and implications for future research will all be explored in this concluding chapter.

CHAPTER II

OBJECTIFICATION AND POWER: PHYSICAL BODIES AT ATTENTION

Separating the Mind from the Body: Power and the Body as an Object

To further develop a philosophical consideration of attention, we need an entry point. Three potentially erroneous assumptions were elucidated in chapter one that will help to provide a foundation for a systematic interrogation of how attention is dealt with in current pedagogical spaces. By understanding the tacit assumptions of how attention interacts with consciousness to produce meaning, we might disclose how these assumptions manifest into particular power relations in classrooms.

The first assumption is that attention is the gatekeeper to consciousness, as evidenced through *Attention*, by Wayne Wu (2014): "S is conscious of X if and only if S attends to X…This model provides a different answer to the metaphysical question: attention is a selective process that is for consciousness. In other words, attention is identified by its distinctive functional link to consciousness" (Wu, 2014, p. 147). This model will be critically interrogated and ultimately found as deficient in this chapter because (a) it suggests that attention does something that is critical to developing meaning – whereas it is possible that conscious understanding does not require attention to *know* something and (b) the model contains a potential fallacy in that I suggests that

attention and consciousness are purely cognitive acts, and seems to ignore the role of the body in producing meaning.

The second assumption is that because attention is assumed to be the gatekeeper to consciousness, attention has a direct impact on learning: "children with attention deficit will inevitably experience some degree of difficulty in school due to their poor concentration" (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 17). Here we might posit a tacit promise in the diagnosis of a deficit of attention: your child has a disorder of attention, and because we know this to be true, we can manage your child differently and help them produce better results in school.

The third assumption is that because attention has a direct impact on learning, inattention must be controlled through systems of power within classroom spaces: "ADDs will affect learning in specific ways requiring specific instructional modifications (Chekes-Julkowski, Sharp, & Stolzenburg, 1997, p. 3). We can see how the first two assumptions lead to the third, and that the result of these assumptions is the conclusion that for the inattentive, attention as a purely cognitive process needs to be directed. But how do you direct the mind? If attention is a cognitive process that needs to be controlled, how might one exert power on a mind? I will argue that the typical pedagogical response to this question is for the teacher to exert power over the bodies of those deemed not in attention, in order to direct a student's mental attention toward whatever the teacher deems salient. In short, to assume that one is conscious of something only if they are attending to it leads to a need to control the physical body, as

it becomes only an impediment to attention, and therefore an impediment to consciousness itself.

Gatekeeping: An Objectification of the Body

To assume that attention[18] is the gatekeeper to consciousness is to tacitly assume a separation between the mind and the body. With the assumption of this separation in place, the pedagogical imperative would be to *still* the body in order to *direct* the mind. This *stilling* reinforces the notion that the body is simply an object, which can then distract the perceiving mind, in this case the subject[19]. What if, however, the body is not object to be perceived by the mind? Positing a contrasting and a more subtle connection between the mind and the body, one might be able to imagine the body itself as a perceiving subject. This would necessarily call into question the assumption that attention can be 'focused' by controlling the body: If anything, attention, if truly an embodied action, might be stifled through controlling the body, leading to a paradox; for "the individual body becomes an element that may be placed, moved, articulated on others…[and] t[]his is a functional reduction of the body" to an object to be controlled (Foucault 1975, p. 164).

[18] The word attention might be though of on two levels here-attention as a cognitive act, or attention as a bodily stillness. What I am troubling here is the unintentional conflation of these two potentially disparate conceptions of attention.

[19] The perceived distinction between an object, a *being-in-itself*, and the subject, a *being-for-itself,* will both be of primary import throughout this chapter and subsequent chapters. For the moment we should imagine an object to be a thing that can be known in *totality*, a thing contained in itself, while a subject is not contained in itself, because its consciousness allows for continuous experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 365).

This previous quote from *Discipline and Punish* by Michel Foucault illustrates an important nexus between the philosophical and the political. The gatekeeping notion that a person is conscious of something only if the person is attending to it leads directly to Foucault's point -- the body is not a part of the process at all in the gatekeeping model, as it is purely cognitive. Therefore we might think of framing attention as purely having a cognitive relationship with the mind as leaving the body entirely out of the meaning making process. Ignoring the body here does reduce the body to an object separate from processes involved in learning. We might make a leap here and ask if deeming a body an object in the name of forcing the correlating mind to pay attention is really justifying attention as a tool of institutional control.

The problem is that the gatekeeping model rejects the body as a part of the functioning of consciousness. From Foucault's notion of a functional reduction of a body into an object, we now need to further parse out this notion of the body as an object. Merleau-Ponty gives clear direction here by suggesting that, an object is *partes ex partes*--a thing self-contained, aside and separate from another thing (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 75). It is in this assumption that the body is simply another object to be attended to separate from an attending consciousness that we might find the essence of the gatekeeper theory of attention played out in common responses to ADD and ADHD.

In transitioning to the evidence presented in ADHD literature, it is clear that these writers are tacitly assuming that a person can only be conscious of a thing if that person is attending to it. We see this assumption evidenced in the suggestion that, "when a stimulus is presented to the brain, one can choose to ignore or to respond to that

stimulus" (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 14). Where is the body in this concept, other than an object that is a vessel for stimuli? Furthermore, with assuming the body as an object, *treating* ADD and ADHD students becomes a matter of controlling the body-object in order to direct the thinking consciousness. We see this emphasis on control in the book *The ADD/ADHD Checklist: A Practical Reference for Parents and Teachers* by Sandra Rief (2008):

> Jotting down a few words or filling in missing information in a guided format is helpful in maintaining their attention…[and] structure the lesson so that it includes the opportunity to work in pairs or small groups for maximum student involvement and attention. (pp. 140-141)

These interventions allude to the assumption of a rather simplistic relationship between attention and consciousness, and positing these types of interventions also assumes that the body is an object to be controlled in order that attention might be better *facilitated*.

One can also see here that the emphasis on structuring students' bodies becomes one of visual attention, insofar as Rief seems to be suggesting that one can structure individuals in such a way as to visually measure student involvement. Further this line of thinking seems to imply that cognitive attention can be *seen* by the students *seeing*, as pedagogical suggestions are often designed to direct visual attention while ignoring physical factors. Rief's further references to 'not paying attention' during 'seat work,' then, focus entirely on the cognitive while ignoring the physical body sitting in an uncomfortable position in a hard seat ((Rief, 2008, p. 144). Consider teaching literature that includes suggestions to "Rearrange the page format to simplify and reduce visual

distractions" (Rief, 2008, p. 167). What can be inferred about the student looking at that paper? Is this student nothing more than a conscious entity internalizing, or taking in stimuli that is directed by some mysterious un-embodied attentional force? Might conscious attention be more complex, and in fact, more connected to the body?

Merleau-Ponty uses an analogy of a house to critique the assumption that the conscious mind operates independently form the body. As I sit writing this, I am looking out of a window in my house. When I attend to the house, I can consider the house in a blend of presences and absences[20] and imagine the house in its entirety in my mind, perhaps imagining a birds eye view in order to take in its scope:

> the non-perspectival term from which all perspectives can be derived; the house itself is the house seen from nowhere. But what do these words mean? To see is always to see from somewhere, is it not? (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 69)

Merleau-Ponty uses this metaphor to suggest that we might erroneously view our bodies in the same way, as seen from *nowhere*. To consider the body as an object is to imagine being in a perspective-less position, a mind somehow floating in a body in the same way that I might sit inside my house. The difference is, of course, that my mind, insofar as I can imagine, cannot leave my body, but is the mind anchored to the body, or more

[20] I am working within what Edmund Husserl first termed as the *phenomenological attitude*. As I intentionally become aware of a thing, I can consider both that which I can see (presences) and that which I can infer but cannot see (absences). As we move forward in this attitude, it will be important to remain aware that as consciousness becomes directed toward a thing, that there are always those aspects which are seen, and those which are inferred, and it is in the interplay within the two that we develop a conceptualization of the *whole* thing (Sokolowski, 2000).

substantively linked? And yet, just like the house, a body is on display, much like an object:

> To see is to enter into a universe of beings that show themselves, and they could not show themselves if they could not also be hidden behind each other or behind me. In other words, to see an object is to come to inhabit it and to thereby grasp all things according to the sides these other things turn toward this object. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, pp. 70-71)

Here we see the critical concern in considering the body as an object for Merleau-Ponty: how can one inhabit ones body as an object if the very being as a part of the object? I see my body from within my body, and therefore in some way control that which is presented to my consciousness. I then attend my body from within my body, which creates a tension when returning to the house metaphor, where clearly a house cannot be seen from nowhere but posited as an object capable of a full description could be seen from everywhere, making it a translucent object which would leave nothing of it hidden (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 71). The body as object then would be a translucent thing that can be directed in totality by some omnipresent consciousness, which could attend to the body as a complete object. In this way one could easily jump to the conclusion that the body as object could be both understood and controlled as an object *partes ex partes* from consciousness.

However, Merleau-Ponty goes on to trouble the notion of knowing an object in its totality by introducing the notion of horizon in perception, and Merleau-Ponty suggests

that because I cannot in fact intend[21] the body at a given time in its totality, but rather as a blend of presences and absences met on a horizon. This inability to intend the body in totality, a *inattention* if you will, leaves the body as object "incomplete and open, as it in fact is in perceptual experience. Through this openness, the substantiality of the object slips away" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 72). He goes onto explain that this "absolute positing of a single object is the death of consciousness, since it congeals all of experience, as a seed crystal introduced into a solution causes it suddenly to crystallize" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 74). Here we finally reach the thesis of Merleau-Ponty's argument by realizing that conceptualizing the body as an object actually makes the very notion that this object has consciousness untenable: this brings for a paradox-we are conscious beings with bodies, which would be impossible if the body were an object that could be understood as a total, self contained thing.

He concludes this section on the body as object by suggesting an alternative notion, and one that will guide the further analysis of this chapter: the body *is* a cognitive attending subject, indivisible from its consciousness precisely because it is in the world. Instead of one having to attend to X to be conscious of X (gatekeeping), one might be conscious of X through other embodied modalities that do not require a certain cognitive

[21] To *intend* again suggests the phenomenological attitude, whereby one focuses on a particular *object* and brackets out preconceived notions in order to develop a conceptualization of the *object*. The critical shift here is that Merleau-Ponty is moving past an eidetic reduction (a description of the thing itself) to transcendental reduction (a description of the very process by which a thing is considered- here Merleau-Ponty is no longer simply developing a description of the body, but also of the modalities used to intend the body, and in this is elucidating the pitfalls of the project of conceptualizing the body as an object in totality (Sokolowski, 2000).

level of attention. Returning to the notion of a subject being for itself and an object being in-itself, consider the fact that *for* suggests action, a being that *does* something, and in this case this *doing* is *perceiving*. The body as a concept, removed from the constraints of an object that can be totalized, might be revealed as a perceiving subject (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 74). Once we philosophically concede the body as a perceiving subject, then it leaves us with a clear quandary: how can a perceiving *body-subject* interact with a separate perceiving *mind-subject*? The answer seems at this point to be that there is no mind-body split at all, and any model of attention must take this embodied subject into account in order to fully understand both how attention might operate and, more to the point, how one might attempt to direct it.

It is with this in mind that I will argue that this gatekeeping view of attention, where the attention is purely cognitive and controls consciousness, is ignoring the embodied experience of attention. Therefore any attempt to understand attention, whether with a view to measure or direct, must first be met with an acknowledgement that treating the body as an object separate from a perceiving subject will lead erroneously to an attempt to still or control bodies rather than to maximize or direct attention, or to put it another way, "The body… becomes [a] highly polished machine…[and] Consciousness of the body and of the soul are thereby repressed" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 78). Conversely, then, "by leaving behind the body as an object, *partes extra partes*, … the consciousness of the body invades the body, the soul spreads across all of its parts, and behavior overflows its central region" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, pp. 77-78). It is this consciousness of the body that will become central to our

concern as we turn toward the mind body problem as evident in current ADD/ADHD literature.

The Hyperactive Body and the Inattentive Mind: The Mind Body Problem Alive

In this section I will suggest that diagnosis of ADD and ADHD might stem more from outdated notions of social control, and as we will explore in a later section, this control is very much concerned with the legislation of the body. In order to fully understand how power structures regulate bodies, however, we need to continue to develop how bodies are functionally reduced to controllable objects in the first place. We considered in chapter one that the phrase 'pay attention' might tacitly be an attempt to exert control over the student with the intended result docility on the part of the student, but how did attention become conflated with this power dynamic in the first pace? While a fairly bold statement, it is useful at this point to think of the development of power dynamics in relation to attention as a reimagining of Cartesian dualism. By treating the *hyperactive* element as separate from the *attention* element, much of the current ADHD research seems to have ignored embodied attention. In this section I will, through a short history, briefly consider secondary sources that are current and reflect contemporary views on ADD and ADHD to elucidate how an assumption of mind-body separation is evident. Lisa L. Weyandt (2007), in her book review of R. A. Barkley's 2006 Book *Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Handbook for Diagnosis and Treatment*, suggests that:

> The nature of ADHD is not simply an assemblage of attention, impulsivity, and attention problems. A legion of studies indicate that ADHD is characterized by a

> broader cognitive impairment that is often manifested in problems with planning, problem solving, manipulating of material in working memory, executive functions, self-regulation, and additional deficits. (p.179)

It is interesting that in this 'broader' understanding of ADHD, there is still almost a total emphasis on the cognitive, thus ignoring bodily manifestations of attention and consciousness. It is telling that the only term that even hints at the body is 'self regulation,' and even in this case, it is clear that the reference is to the mind regulating the body-as-an-object. The notion of executive function impairment seems simply a new way of suggesting that there is a problem with how the brain regulates the body, reframing the old Cartesian notion that the mind can act upon the body just as the mind can act on any other object.

Now is an ideal moment to pause and remember that ADD and ADHD are two distinct 'disorders,' and that distinction is clear in the majority of current ADHD literature as well as the current DSM. Gordon Forbes' (1998) working definition of the terms ADD and ADHD will serve us well for this section, distinguishing "the term attention deficit disorder/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)" as describing "children whose symptoms include both inattention and hyperactivity" from "the term attention deficit disorder (ADD) [which is] used to describe children whose attention problems are not accompanied by significant hyperactivity" (p. 466). While typically lumped together in modern literature, it is significant to note that hyperactivity was a consistently documented behavior well before being grouped in with other behaviors such as inattention in the late 1960s (Guyer, 2000, pp. 12-15).

The fact that a preoccupation with controlling the body comes well before the idea of controlling cognitive attention is evidenced by Gabrielle Weiss and Lily Hechtman (1979), in their piece entitled "The Hyperactive Child Syndrome" where they point out "the hyperactive child...was described more than one hundred years ago in the medical literature" (p. 1438). A commonly cited example of this notion of the early existence of hyperactivity is the nursery rhyme by Heinrich Hoffman in his 1844 collection entitled Struwwelpeter: Merry Stories and funny pictures:

> Fidgety Philip…won't sit still
> He wriggles
> And Giggles
> And then I declare
> Swung backward and forward,
> And tilts up his chair
> Just like any rocking horse;
> Philip I am getting cross! (Smith, 2010, p. 25)

One can clearly see in this early example that the author understands that Philip is engaging in physical behaviors that subvert the norm, in this case hyperactivity, activity inappropriate to environment, and a general disregard for said behavior, i.e. giggling. What is interesting about this early example is that it is principally focused on the physical outwardly visible signs of hyperactivity. His physical movements clearly make the writer cross, with the implicit suggestion that the disruption is counterproductive while not speaking directly to the notion of attention per se. It is also worthwhile to point out that the example illustrates young people with these types of behaviors have existed

for centuries, and that it has only been "avidly pathologized during the last fifty years" (Smith, 2010, p. 27).

The earliest mentioning of hyperactivity and inattentiveness together dates back to 1902 (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 436). The only major inconsistencies in these studies were the diagnostic labels, of which we can count more than 20 to date that describe these types of behaviors, and the causes that were attributed to the behaviors, as evidenced by an analysis of these early studies (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 436).

In the early 1900s, while science was clearly beginning to dictate the discourse in many disciplines, psychiatry was still a youthful discipline and *moral problems* were infantile considerations in the discipline of medicine. One of the first individuals noted for work related to the moral problems was the English doctor, Sir George Frederick Still, whose 1902 lecture documented by Rick Mayes and Adam Rafalovich (2007) pointed out that many of the children that Still studied "exhibited violent outbursts, wanton mischievousness, destructiveness and a lack of responsiveness to punishment," as well as a "quite abnormal incapacity for sustained attention, causing school failure even in the absence of intellectual retardation" (p. 437). Notice the interesting disparity between the two behavioral descriptions. Why connect the cognitive behavior of un-sustained attention with the physical behaviors such as outbursts and destructiveness? Was there an early understanding that these phenomena were often comorbid, or was the connection rather more haphazard? One wonders if the inclination to connect the cognitive with the physical in these early examples alludes toward the preoccupation with control of the

body as an object in order to focus the mind. This notion of control becomes slightly more insidious when the element of social class is introduced as early as the 1930s.

Mayes and Adam Rafalovich (2007) follow up the observations of Dr. Still with a description of the pivotal studies of researchers Eugene Kahn and Louis Cohen in 1934 (p. 441). While Kahn and Cohen identified in a number of patients behaviors similar to those observed by Still, Mayes and Rafalovich (2007) make a remarkable observation about the tone of Kahn and Cohen's work in their New England Journal of Medicine article (p. 441). Mayes and Rafalovich (2007) noted a line in the Kahn and Cohen article that posited "that the over -- as well as the under -- development of certain brain areas serves as a sort of background of certain plus and minus members of the species" (p. 442). Mayes and Rafalovich (2007) go on to suggest that this was an early attempt to develop a biological argument for the existence of these types of behaviors, and yet the impetus for this suggestion may be less than noble science (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 442). If we put the comments of Kahn and Cohen into their historical context, one can clearly determine that developing a theory about biological causes for disorders might well come out of a social Darwinist framework (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 442). To take this notion a step further than Mayes and Rafalovich, however, we can see a rather troubling theme emerge: in the same way so called biological factors were taken into consideration in the quasi-science of eugenics to improve the human race through genetic profiling, one can see the attraction that early researchers may have had to isolating ADD and ADHD type behaviors as biological: if they can be identified, then they can be bred out. This is significant as it establishes the notion that identifying a *disorder* might not in

fact lead to a better situation for those individuals that are affected by it. Perhaps more disturbing is the fact that this is not a concept isolated in time, as we can clearly see from a modern article by Karla J. Gingerich, Patrick Turnock, Jodi K. Litfin, and Lee A. Rosén (1998), "Diversity and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder:"

> According to [the social drift] theory, individuals with ADHD are likely to benefit less from education than their non-ADHD peers, and tend to inhabit lower SES [socio-economic status] brackets as a result. Consequently, because of the high level of heritability of the disorder and the tendency of low SES families to remain low SES intergenerationally, …the incidence of ADHD within this population will tend to remain larger than the incidence within either middle or upper-class SES groups. (Gingerich, 1998, p. 421).

This is compelling considered in isolation, but particularly when put into its historical context, it becomes clear that there is an implication that the delineations ADD and ADHD bring with them significant connections to social class and what's more are rooted deeply in an antiquated notion that social strata is somehow biologically determined. This speaks clearly to the notion posited at the beginning of this section: that diagnosis of ADD and ADHD might stem more from outdated notions of social control, and as we will explore in a later section, this control is very much concerned with the legislation of the body. First, however, we need to consider potential significations in the very creation of the terms ADD and ADHD, as this will elucidate further the tacit assumption at the core of ADD and ADHD that the mind is separate from the body.

Naming concepts give them significance and, if this is the case, then certainly naming a condition in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder*s in 1980

(Ramundo, 2000, p. 150) gave the collection of behaviors formally associated with hyperactive child syndrome both significance and a substantive medical credence:

> The publication of DSM-III (APA, 1980) and the official 'birth' of ADD inserted a degree of psychiatric legitimacy into the discussion of childhood hyperactivity and impulsivity. (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 437)

There is a further significance to the naming of concepts, and that is the official connection of two otherwise disparate behaviors previously not linked -- inattention and hyperactivity. It was Jody Alberts-Corush (1986) who explicitly pointed out this rather important connection. Alberts-Corush (1986) argues that not only are hyperactivity and inattention linked, but also that inattention was now, in the new diagnosis, the centrally defining factor in the disorder (p. 413). This marks an important evolution in the history of the disorder, considering that we started with 'fidgety Philip who can't sit still,' and moved by the mid 1990s to a "chronic, debilitating disorder affecting approximately 5% of United States elementary school-aged children" (cited in Gingerich et al, 1998, p. 415).

Given increased attention to attention, it might be no surprise that cases of these diagnoses increased during the period after initial listing in the DSM. Yet, a precise method surrounding diagnosis seemed to be more and more difficult to locate, as Brown and Wynne's (1984) study indicates, warning about "a burgeoning concern regarding the lack of specificity as to the precise meaning of the term *attentional disturbance* which has been attributed to hyperactive children" (p. 38). It seems possible that this observation indicates an early example of this development of the concept of an attentional

disturbance or deficit as a means of controlling unruly bodies: the assumption seems to be that the mind cannot attend because this uncontrollable body as object is getting in the way. Now that we have established that attention may have been repositioned as a conceptual tool used as a means to exert power, what might this attentional power dynamic look like? In the second half of this chapter I will posit a model that illustrates how bodies are treated as objects and made into commodities through a primacy of visual evidences, steeped in Foucault's notion of exercise.

Power: The Exercise of the Body as Commodity

How does the potentially erroneous assumption of mind-body dualism develop a model of attention as a tool for the preservation of power structures? Now that we see that assuming a mind-body split makes an object of the body, we ought to consider precisely how the body is re-conceptualized into a commodity to be manipulated is used as a tool of power and control. I use the term commodity here simply because it alludes to an object that can be produced, bought, sold, and manipulated for personal or institutional gain. To consider this, we must turn our focus to the institution of schooling, as this is the area where we see the assumptions about attention play out in pedagogical contexts. With this in mind, consider from an institutional perspective that reducing the body to an object allows the object to be turned into a commodity, one that might be shaped and governed -- a useful tool of control in an era where we seem to value free will of the mind while at the same time objectifying the body through what Henry Giroux, in ON Critical Pedagogy (2011) refers to as "the principles of order, control, and certainty" (p. 39). This produces institutions which favor

"behavioral and management approaches to…pedagogy, particularly at the level of middle and secondary education, [which] reduce learning to a set of practices (Giroux, 2011, p. 39). The use of the word reduce here is significant, because it alludes to our concern about a reduction of bodies to objects, and therefore to commodities. This ties us to our previously stated concern about objectification leading to what Foucault terms a "functional reduction of the body" (Foucault 1975, p. 164). It seems to be therefore that only through a conceptualization of the body as an object can systems of power create practices that keep themselves in place.

Rather than this line of thinking veering from the topic of attention, I suggest that attention actually becomes a convenient concept by which to objectify the bodies of students and therefore, "[s]chool…tends to make a total claim on the time and energies of its participants [which] in turn, makes the teacher into custodian" of students bodies (Illich, 1970, p. 30). This quote by Ivan Illich from his work *Deschooling Society* highlights that attention as a tool of power and control is not simply developed and implemented by practitioners, but is rather a larger construct designed to develop control and accountability for them as well, by making a total claim on their time. Not only then must a student be in attention, but also the teacher must demonstrate an ability to keep the student in attention. Attention, then, in the guise of a cognitive pedagogical aid, actually becomes more of a tool in which to reduce the students to bodies which need, and the teacher to caretaker of these bodies in need. Attentional activities as a kind of tool might be likened to Michel Foucault's term, *exercise*, or a "technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different" (Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The

Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 161). These exercises allow for students to pay attention by focusing on performing bodily tasks, which more often than not do not actually correlate to any cognitive or actually function of cognitive learning. Yet, there is always the assumption that attention must be paid during these activities, simply because it is owed. This leads to ever expanding laundry lists of exercises that institutions have developed, including "tardy bells, hall passes, graded conduct, report cards, citizenship ratings, dress codes, straight lines, and silence," many of which provide little in the way of meaningful learning, yet it is deemed essential that students' pay attention during these activities simply because it is owed (Farber 1972, p. 17-21). Jerry Farber, in his controversial educational polemic *Student as Nigger* goes on to suggest that this type of exercise of the body has "turned students in to socialized 'slaves' who are essentially "authority addicts." A theme that ties Illich, Farber, Giroux and Foucault together is that each of them have recognized that schooling as an institution has become more concerned with managing bodies under the guise of learning-thus reducing students' bodies to a commodity that can be manipulated into docility.

And how does this authority over an objectified body function? Far from arguing a modernist Orwellian totalitarianism it seems that that perhaps modernity has developed a far subtler and more sophisticated means of control whereby the body becomes an object marketed for material gain. One might think of this process in business language: one submits to bodily control that one might pay attention rather than be in deficit. These deposits then expand credit with the institution that one might cash out in the future for financial success. To set the context to better parse out this model of social control, I

turn to Zygmunt Bauman, who, in *Alone Again: Ethics After Certainty* (1994) lays out a clear argument for how this model of business becomes a tool not merely for control, but a subtle measure with which to legislate the very morality of the populace.

At this point it is critical to position the evolution of attentional deficits into codified 'disorders' within the context of a post-modern movement through an examination of the changing nature of philosophical and political power structures. In order to best understand the aforementioned nexus between the philosophical and the political-the philosophical assumption that the body is an object separate form the attending mind-we must understand how power systems subtly evolved during modernity from overt power structures to more covert ones. Bauman (1994) outlines this evolution by first defining power systems in modernity:

> The message [of modernity] was straightforward: if you wish men to be moral, you must force them to be so. Only under the threat of pain will men stop paining each other. To stop fearing each other, men must fear a power superior to them all. (p. 3)

We might then understand the modern word in terms of overt power and coercion, which "must be founded on Law, and there must be an ethical code… consisting of prescriptions and prohibitions…memorizing and following the rules" (Bauman, 1994, p. 4). Laws, Prohibitions, and coercion all allude to more overt power structures, yet Bauman suggests something subtler, and it is this following idea that will become salient to our concern:

> Modernity came up with two great institutions meant to … to assure the prevalence of morality through following rules…[o]ne was bureaucracy, the other was business… Bureaucracy strangles or criminalizes moral impulses, while business merely pushes them aside. (Bauman, 1994, pp. 4,10)

And here Bauman has given us a context by which we might proceed into the next section, understanding that these two silent legislators of human action work symbiotically and often without us even acknowledging these forms of control. Business specifically has conditioned us to believe in sort of quasi-freedom in which we can choose to follow the rules in order to achieve particular 'capital gains.' Little of this would be possible in educational institutions, however, without some type of capital to do business with. This is where the notion of the body as a commodity comes full circle – students learn that their bodies can be used to get what they want, or at least they can use them to get perfect attendance or a good behavioral report every nine weeks. The result is that students learn to manage their bodies as a commodity, and they gain a perceived advantage while the institution maintains control. To see this commoditization in action in the next section, we revisit the earlier posited business metaphor in three distinct parts: the deficit, the deposit, and the credit.

Deficit

To make the command 'to pay' suggested that something is *owed*. By legislating control of bodies in an institution is to first suggest that attention through docility is owed, and can be paid back through certain measures of control, or exercises. Consider, for a moment , your body in a relaxed state. Then imagine the command 'pay attention!' What happens in the moment when that command is given? What are you giving with

your body in that moment that perhaps you were not giving before, at least in terms of visual cues? Do you sit up straight, or perhaps stand? Do you direct your head and eyes in a particular direction? Does your breathing change? You are, in essence, giving something to the commander with your body: the physical stance of attention, as it is perceived. Did you not have attention before the physical change, and by presenting your body in a particular way did you 'pay' attention using your body as currency? Does there have to be a physical connection between the exercise and the cognitive aspect/content? Foucault suggests that, in the moment before the command, you were in a perceived attention gap, so to speak:

> Disciplinary punishment has the function of reducing gaps. It must therefore be essentially corrective. In addition to punishments borrowed directly from the judicial model…the disciplinary systems favor punishments that are exercise - intensified, multiplied forms of training, several times repeated. (Foucault 1975, p. 179)

In context here, it should be made clear that Foucault is making a direct connection between how military institutional practices began to influence pedagogical institutional practices, but it is precisely the type of bodily control utilized in military contexts that will ultimately become standard practice in educational institutions. The emphasis in the present is not on the ability to work in a cohesive unit; rather it is to use the currency of the body as a promise of future success. One other critical point to note in this quote is the mention of reducing gaps. While written in 1975, this phrase is alive and well in schools across the United States as state mandated testing has motivated many districts to discuss closing student learning gaps. Going into classrooms and seeing teachers

discussing gaps and trending data points reiterates the notion that all students are somehow in deficit. Whether it is attendance, graduation rate, grade point average, or discipline data, the focus is on improvement, and the tacit assumption is that we must somehow work our way out of deficit, and the answer seems to be through the ct of commoditizing compliant bodies.

If the physical positioning of the body in a pre-attentional state is to be thought of as 'owing' attention, how does one pay? Certainly, through surveillance, authority can determine the difference between a body 'at attention' and one not 'at attention,' but furthering this control becomes a project of regulating bodies temporally as well as physically. Foucault points out that, from the classical period on, control was cultivated through the regulation of "time, bodies and forces (Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 157). He goes on to speak about capitalizing "the time of individuals, [to] accumulate it in each of them, in their bodies" and how to organize what he calls "profitable durations" (Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 157). Foucault's language here is absolutely in line with the notion of the body as capital, a commodity used to generate *profit*. The use of the word profit here is important, because it alludes to something beyond control and subjugation, simply control for control's sake. The profit here might be imagined in a number of iterations, among those being evaluative test scores, but the greater underlying idea is that the profit generated would come from attention, retention, and the promise of a promising future post education.

While we will return to the manifestations of this profit in a future section, it bears further elucidation that the underlying assumption is that bodies not regulated cannot or will not generate profit, and that only through a legislation of time and activity is profit possible. Also in this passage Foucault alludes to the notion of maximizing profit over time by experimenting with what he referred to as the rearranging of activities to produce more profitable durations. This is very similar to current pedagogical models based on ideas like 'continuous improvement.[22]

These connections between Foucault's regulation of the body and modern educational practices are explicitly evidenced in the following passage:

> The 'seriation' of successive activities makes possible a whole investment of duration by power: the possibility of a detailed control and a regular intervention (of differentiation, correction, punishment, elimination) in each moment of time; the possibility of characterizing, and therefore of using individuals according to the level in the series that they are moving through; the possibility of accumulating time and activity, of rediscovering them, totalized and usable in a final result, which is the ultimate capacity of an individual. Temporal dispersal is brought together to produce a profit, thus mastering a duration that would otherwise elude one's grasp. Power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use. (Foucault, 1975, p. 160)

Of course we can point out that the words investment and profit fit clearly with the model that we have already established, but what of his use of the word 'differentiation.' It is fascinating that this term is common parlance in contemporary educational circles, and

[22] *Continuous improvement* models have gained significant footing in public education in recent years. These *results oriented* models borrow from the language and practice of business management. Perhaps the most well known example is the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, with criteria for schools which focus on focusing on performance outcomes, efficiency and continuously improving results (U.S. Department of Commerce , 2010).

typically refers to tailoring tasks and assessments to students at multiple levels (Brimijoin, Marquisee, & Tomlinson, 2003, pp. 70-71). In this context, however, it is easy to recognize that there really isn't anything particularly innovative about differentiation as it plays out in modern classrooms, especially if one considers differentiation to simply be another form of exercise, in this sense tailored to specific students, but still under the auspices of directing a body toward attention in order to maximize potential *profits*. In this way, individualized exercise is an increasingly more subtle exertion of power on the individual's body, tailoring exercises in order to maximize the use of time in order to produce specific results "for the economy of activities and organic control" (Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 161). Always, however, there is the undercurrent that whatever the exercise, the impetus for it is a deficit. Differentiation is deemed necessary whether help struggling students because they are behind, or push excelling students because they are not achieving their full potential, but always there is a deficit – we owe, so we keep the commoditized bodies in exercise. And yet, the system always produces this hope that continuous improvement will lead to positive results, and these results are banked, both individually and collectively as schools and districts, in the hope that this banking will pull us out of deficit, which brings us to the second piece of the metaphor, deposit.

Deposit

How then does one count the profits, or rather, how do we deem attention given, or deposited? Certainly as was before mentioned, deposit is primarily a visual measurement, at least in the pedagogical moment. However there is at least believed to

be a correlative cognitive measurement that occurs in a summative fashion. This is easily illustrated by imagining a rambunctious student, who performs poorly on an exam, and the teacher suggests the rambunctiousness as a reason for the child's poor score; the child is deemed to have a deficit of attention due to an overabundance of physical actions, and a correlating poor summative evaluation. While this might seem a rather obvious *correlation implying causation* fallacy, the result is the hope that the body becomes a deposit to be redeemed at a later time. Data is tracked, and actions are documented, and the commodity of the body produces results that can be deposited, and pay dividends in the future. If this is truly the case, then we need to consider two basic questions: what evidence is gathered to verify attentional 'deposits,' and how are these deposits valued?

The very notion of a deficit suggests that there is a making up of this deficit; deposits made in order that a profit or equilibrium might be reached. This notion means that while there is a sense that progress in the form of profit from exercises ought to be continuous, there is also sense that there is a goal, and therefore there must be a measure, in rather continuous measurements, in order to make the exercises have meaning beyond some vague intrinsic value:

> By bending behavior towards a terminal state, exercise makes possible a perpetual characterization of the individual either in relation to this term, in relation to other individuals, or in relation to a type of itinerary. It thus assures, in the form of continuity and constraint, a growth, an observation, a qualification…. linear, continuously progressive organization. (Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 161)

Much in the way that a bank account can never be big enough, attentional deposits are ongoing. A number of points might be brought out here, and it is valuable to consider the linear theme as it harkens back to the very linear notion of gatekeeping itself. We might then think of attentional deposits in a series of steps:

1. Attention must be facilitated by bodily control. If we still assume that consciousness can only be conscious of something it gives attention to, then the body must be stilled in order to achieve attention.
2. In attention consciousness must make meaning of sensory data and be able to articulate this meaning under a specific set of circumstances. To continue the metaphor, you have to bank with the right currency.
3. Finally, you have to be able to actually put the money in the bank. You must be able to reproduce evidence of your attention: evidence that your consciousness has produced the right meaning, so that you can produce qualification.

The linear nature of this metaphor is continuous, there is no end, and in this the power structure is self-perpetuating in that individuals begin to equate control of the body to future success, even past the next set of qualifications. In this way, Bauman's theory of the control of business is complete: I learns that my body, or at least the perceived attention of my body is a commodity that must be continually directed by some power in order to produce continuous results. Foucault goes so far as to say that, " exercise… never reached its limit" (Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 162).

This process of deposit is posited as being for the good of the student – a continuation of the popular bootstraps narrative that education is the only way to success.

Do not make the mistake, however, of assuming that there is an altruistic goal in this project of control -- we as an American society have developed an erroneous narrative that suggests that there is an element of personal freedom in striving for individual gains which obfuscates the clear intent of Bauman's project of modernity, which was to provide societal control en mass, not provide existential freedom, in "a power that seems all the less 'corporeal' in that it is more subtly ' physical'" (Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 177). In short, and paraphrased directly from Karl Marx, "this power is due to cooperation itself" (Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 162). This cooperation simply requires the belief that there is a deficit in bodily attention, and that there is an instrumental way to eliminate this deficit. In continuing this metaphor, then, how does one build attentional credit, and how is this credit measured? Might we imagine something that looks like an attentional credit score? Can you commit attentional fraud? What would that look like?

Credit

The development of examination allowed institutions to begin to measure students' performance. It is hard to imagine any facet of the institution of education more accepted as absolutely necessary to teaching and learning than that of examination or assessment; it is equally as difficult to imagine any facet of education that has been as widely studied and commented upon as assessment and examination. In understanding attention in terms of the business model previously mentioned, examination also has a central role to play, as "the examination introduced a whole mechanism that linked to a certain type of the formation of knowledge a certain form of the exercise of power"

(Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 187). The wording here, while seeming a bit cumbersome, is critical. The phrase "a certain type of the formation of knowledge" speaks directly to how control is possible and how a business model works.

In a market based economy certain forms of capital are privileged above others, and these forms are privileged because they are in greater demand. In applying a business model to schooling, the same notion would apply, but where does the demand come from? Here is where it becomes tricky -- the demand is not to produce a knowledgeable student -- this is clear in that Foucault uses the phrase *formation of knowledge* as opposed to simply *knowledge*. To ascertain what one *knows* in this context is vastly different from ascertaining *how that knowledge is* formed. If the desired outcome is a body that can form knowledge in certain specific ways and under specific contexts, then we might say that the demand here is for the production of marketable bodies that perform well under certain specific contexts.

Foucault goes on to say that "the examination transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power" (Foucault, 1975, p. 187). This idea is important because it reiterates the previously mentioned concern of the primacy of the visual, or in other words that which can be *seen* to pay attention is valued above any other measurable outcome because this body in attention a marketable commodity. Credit is then gained by a particular bodily performance which can be measured by the examination, but tied directly back to a record of visual evidence leading up to the examination, as we see in that the

> Examination also introduces individuality into the field of documentation. The examination leaves behind it a whole meticulous archive constituted in terms of bodies and days. The examination that places individuals in a field of surveillance also situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass o f documents that capture and fix them. (Foucault, 1975, p. 189)

It is easy to envision the process of schooling as documenting students' bodies, archiving performance, and predicting results of upcoming examination through surveillance techniques that privileges docile compliant bodies, and allows them to build credit in the system, while simultaneously documenting those in deficit.

This surveillance of bodies becomes the principal instrument of tabulating attentional credit, normalizing particular behaviors, or to put it another way, "it is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish" (Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975, p. 185). As previously alluded to, there is individuality present in this surveillance, but it is about classifying as an object to be marketed rather than a fully realized subject. The examination coupled with the surveillance "makes each individual a 'case… it is also the individual who has to be trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded, etc." (Foucault, 1975, p. 191).

Credit is built within this cycle of classification and correction, but often it is at the expense of the individual's actual learning needs. Often what happens in this situation is a type of credit fraud; bodies are successfully normalized in accordance with tacitly accepted standards, leading to assumptions of credit in the absence of any real attention. As with any institutionalized system, people learn to find the loopholes – and

the loopholes here mean that students manage to figure out exactly what their teachers want to see from their bodies, and often manage to 'cheat the system. When the system rewards a particular set of bodily exercises, figuring out how to fake them is always a possibility. There are specific themes that arise here, and credit fraud in this case occurs as a flaw in the power system -- the primacy of the visual will see individual bodies deemed as compliant in exercises and apparently at attention, while these same individuals might in fact be having actual learning difficulties that are veiled by their docile compliant bodies[23]. For now, however, let us delve back into the model of credit, deficit, and deposit to explore the gap between these perceived knowledge relationships and what might actually be occurring.

Stealing Attention: The Body as Active Resistance

In the same way that a student might see how a system is flawed, and exploit the loopholes, another student might see the same flaw and simply decide not to play the game. I mean to suggest that these are both potential implications for a system that configures attention as being purely cognitive, and ignores the attentional implications of the body. At this point I have established a model of control that mirrors a business model of deficit, deposit, and credit, and these have been based on the basic assumption that the body is an object separate from the mind. *And yet I spent the first section of this chapter arguing that it isn't.* What are the ramifications of a system predicated on the

[23] This will be a central focus in chapter three, as we will examine specific examples of normalized bodies who are deemed in attention, and given credit as such, while in fact knowledge relationships are being compromised and learning, so to speak, might not be happening as assumed.

assumption of the body object? *The answer is that that system is resisted.* Active resistance in any context often include acts that go against the dictates of the state, often breaking the law or established ethical code.[24]

With this responsibility for self-care at the forefront of our thought, I suggest that a genuine moral moment of resistance might be to steal attention back from structures of power. This resistance doesn't necessarily come from a cognitive mental consciousness- one does not necessarily decide in a moment to 'steal attention' from somebody else -- but rather it is perhaps ones embodied consciousness that necessitates an action not deemed appropriate by authority. If it were this body-consciousness, the thinking body, that resists allowing itself to be treated as an object[25], it would be wise at this point to more closely examine exactly how the body as cogito works.

For this we return to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* to see both how cognition and evidence of that cognition are available within the construct of the body-subject:

> My body is the place or, rather, the very actuality of the phenomenon of expression (*Ausdruck*); in my body, visual and auditory experience, for example, are pregnant with each other, and their expressive value grounds the pre-

[24] We might return to Zygmunt Bauman for a moment and consider that, for Bauman, post-modern morality was often about going against an established ethical code when confronted with a responsibility to do so. (Bauman in Alone Again: Ethics After Certainty Bauman in Alone Again: Ethics After Certainty). Granted, Bauman was working within the Levinasian framework of Responsibility for the Other, but I argue that an equally moral moment in the life of an individual is taking responsibility for one's self care.

[25] I suggest that the body is objectified because it is viewed in the context I have described as a thing that can be fully determined, understood, and manipulated as such. At any point the body is a vessel that holds the mind, this functional reduction occurs.

> predicative unity of the perceived world, and, through this, its verbal expression (*Darstellung*) and intellectual signification (*Bedeutung*). My body is the common texture of all objects and is, at least with regard to the perceived world, the general instrument of my "understanding" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 244).[26]

There are two extremely important language choices that Merleau-Ponty makes here which deserve further exploration: the first is 'actuality, and the second is 'texture.' It is interesting that Merleau-Ponty chose to use the word 'place,' and then seems to correct himself with the word 'actuality.' This is significant because the notion of place is far too much like a vessel to prove a useful metaphor, particularly as it risks repositioning the body as object. Actuality is, while certainly a noun, a more abstract and less object like descriptor. Actuality, being a space where a thing is actualized, reinforces the impossibility of separating body and mind, as cognitive expression doesn't really become a thing until actualized *by* the body (as opposed to *in* the body). This, as one might imagine, is salient to the larger concern insofar as controlling a body as a commodity interferes with the actualization of expression. In short, one cannot really have 'free' expression within a confined body.

The second critical concern in the passage is the use of the word texture. Understanding that Merleau-Ponty is working phenomenologically, he is very careful to

[26] A quick a note on translations: Donald Landes, who translated the edition that I am primarily using, has what I see as a firmer grasp on Merleau-Ponty's conceptualization of the body schema than some previous translations, which is evidenced in this passage. The first English version of *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith, used the metaphor of the body as fabric, while the Landes translation uses the metaphor of the body as texture-texture is the better metaphor here as it posits the body as an aspect of a thing rather than a thing in itself-a distinction that later analysis will reveal as significant.

make distinctions between an object being intended and 'aspects' or 'moments' of objects being intended.[27] Texture must be an aspect of a thing, and never a thing in itself, an object *partes ex partes*. The apparent contradiction of describing the body as simultaneously a texture and an instrument, then, gives the reader pause. However, it is precisely in this contradiction that Merleau-Ponty is working his phenomenology of the body-subject; the body is simultaneously an aspect of our total consciousness and an instrument for the output of expression and input of sensation and interpretation. The body as a receptor of sensations is a fact that is rather clearly noted in ADHD research, and yet this seems to be where the understanding of the body in relation to attention ends:

> Certain stimuli will take precedence. A loud firecracker or a sudden bolt of lightning will get everyone's attention. Pain, whether physical or emotional, will also compete strongly for attention. (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 17)

The problem here seems to be that there is a misunderstanding of the body's role in consciousness, and this will be explored more deeply in subsequent chapters. For now, however, it is important that we understand that the body viewed as an object would be simply a vessel for communicating 'bombardments of distraction' (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 18), rather than an aspect of consciousness that is actively a part of the process of learning and understanding. With the body positioned as an object, it becomes the imperative to limit stimuli that might distract from learning, rather than reposition the

[27] In phenomenological language, a moment is a way in which you might experience an object – I might experience the slippery surface of a table after a drink has spilled, but slipperiness is not a thing that I can experience as an object in-itself. Thinking of the body as a moment or aspect of the conscious subject is a way that Merleau-Ponty enriches our understanding of the embodied subject-the mind and the body as one entity.

body's role in learning. With this repositioning, we might begin to see the thinking body as resisting attempts to stultify its consciousness through restraining control measures, i.e. 'sit still and pay attention.'

A useful place to start in this concern is with the very notion of a body's response to stimulus: reflex. It might generally be thought in pure scientific terms that the body is a vessel that contains receptors to stimuli, and that involuntary or bodily responses to these are reflexes. The notion of 'involuntary,' however, needs to be troubled. When we simply consider bodily responses as reflex, or involuntary, we further objectify the body, as opposed to positioning it as a body-subject. Merleau-Ponty elucidation of behavioral milieu is helpful here, as he develops a phenomenological disclosure of reflex within the context of the body subject:

> …Attention to life is the consciousness we gain of "nascent movements" in our body…. In fact, reflexes themselves are never blind processes: they adjust to the "sense" of the situation, they express our orientation toward a "behavioral milieu" just as much as they express the action of the "geographical milieu" upon us (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 81).

This conceptualization of reflex and orientation is truly radical in the face of common assumptions about attention and consciousness: the very notion that attention is consciousness gained through the nascent movements of our bodies is critical here. Again there is this notion of horizon; these nascent, or budding movements of our bodies, create a complex horizon on which we layer meaning, and it cannot occur in mental isolation. He is not suggesting here that attention is the same thing as consciousness, rather he seems to be suggesting a more radical idea, which is that the nascent

movements of our bodies might actually direct consciousness, and that further that our bodies might actually create meaning before consciousness. Consider the words sense, express and adjust, all attributed to the body in the previous quote. It seems as if the body might be more indelibly involved in the process of making meaning than previously thought. The idea that the body develops a geographic milieu of understanding is clear enough -- we orient ourselves in physical space with our bodies, but the notion of behavioral milieu is an important point of departure from previous thinking rooted in more behavioral notions of the body. We are not rats or dogs,[28] and our actions cannot be predicted in mere terms of response to stimulus. Rather there is a far more sophisticated interplay between the body and how we behave in any given context. Perhaps imagining the body as simply responding to stimuli amounts to the type of functional reduction that Foucault intuited in an earlier section: To reduce bodily interactions as ontological human response to stimuli might be the most basic way to develop control techniques for bodies- but I hope, by reimaging the body as a perceiving subject, to move toward understanding how an embodied subject might attend to content in any various context. In short, since perhaps we don't really fully grasp how much meaning our bodies might be producing before our consciousness, we risk losing certain opportunities to learn and make meaning by 'stilling' our bodies.

[28] This isn't to say that rats or dogs really work this way either, only to allude to the work of behaviorists who use animal responses to stimuli as ways to make arguments about how humans might learn. In fact, Merleau-Ponty uses the term 'animal' in place of 'human' to suggest that his phenomenology of consciousness isn't necessarily limited to humans, and that also serves to demystify human consciousness in the face of rational notions of the exceptionality of the human mind (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 80-81).

So let us return to the theme of this section, stealing attention. I have argued that a traditional approach to attention, which its assumptions of the body as an object separate from the mind, develops a business-style power structure, with deficits, deposits, and credit. If this is the case, how does the body in knowledge relation with its surroundings react to being held prisoner as an object while the mind's attention is 'directed?' I mean to suggest that the body as an agent of self-care might in fact has the capacity to steal attention back from those who would direct it. In any system one can find those who will rebel against authority, and that would seem to go doubly for a system set up with extreme flaws. Is it really any mystery that "distractibility frequently becomes a more serious problem during the late elementary and junior high school years" (Moss pg. 18), when these years in the institution of schooling are filled with attempts to confine and commoditize bodies which are trying to develop knowledge relation with their surroundings? With this in mind, we might say that these *attentional deficits* are merely the body attempting active resistance by stealing back the attention that is being taken from it. In other words, to attempt to exert power and control over bodies in attempt to still the body might actually make attention worse, rather than improve it.

The Embodied Subject at the Forefront

I will conclude this chapter by reiterating that assuming attention is the gatekeeper to consciousness is to tacitly assume a separation between the mind and the body. I have outlined a case for suggesting that assumption of this mind body separation is present in much of the current literature on ADD and ADHD, and further this assumption is a foundational tool of power structures that exist in modern classrooms developed as a

means to control bodies by commoditizing them. I have also suggested an alternative notion that bodies are not objects, and it is this very fact that allows for moments of active resistance in educational institutions. I reiterate Maurice Merleau-Ponty's point that "Taken concretely, man is not a psyche joined to an organism, but rather this back-and-forth of existence that sometimes allows itself to exist as a body and sometimes carries itself into personal acts" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 90). When the body carries itself into personal acts, it truly does become a thinking entity capable of directing consciousness, and in this sense the body is as much a part of being in attention as the mind is. There is simply no way to separate mental attention from bodily attention as the connections are far too subtle and complex to be directed. To think that one can make the mind attend by directing the body in particular ways is a simplistic notion in that, "there is no single movement in a living body that is an absolute accident with regard to psychical intentions and no single psychical act that has not found at least its germ or its general outline in physiological dispositions" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 90)

Methodologically, in this chapter while I have woven in strands from various thinkers including Zygmunt Bauman and Michel Foucault, the principal theme that shines through is that of the embodied subject as developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I return to Merleau-Ponty because he continues to remind us that any time we begin a consideration of an aspect of human behavior, such as attention, we ought to first consider how the embodied subject encounters the world before we focus purely on mental acts. He points out that "through an imperceptible shift, an organic process opens up into a human behavior, an instinctive act turns back upon itself and becomes an

emotion or, inversely, a human act becomes dormant and is continued absentmindedly as a reflex" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, pp. 90-91). Here I think that we can begin to move toward the understanding of an attentional construct that is quite different from that which holds attention as a purely cognitive process, a gatekeeper of consciousness. It is this vacillation from bodily reflex, to conscious meaning making of these reflexes, and back to reflex, which truly develops into consciousness, or creating knowledge relations with our world. Merleau-Ponty further points out that "[t]he psychical and the physiological can be related through exchanges that prevent almost every attempt to define a mental disturbance as either psychic or somatic" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 91). While I might trouble his use of language with disturbance, I think it more useful to remove the reified pejorative connotation of the word and consider it simply as an act of being that disturbs a typical order. With this in mind attentional concerns can be applied to this notion of disturbance-they disturb the power structures in place in institutions of schooling. Returning to his text, then, it is clear that the defining of attention deficits as either psychic (i.e. 'executive functioning impairments) or somatic (i.e. hyperactivity) is extremely problematic.

As a final note in this chapter I would begin to turn our attention to some particulars in relation to bodies in attention, and this will help to pave the way toward more specific explorations in subsequent chapters. Here returning again to Merleau-Ponty, we see a fascinating passage at the end of his chapter interrogating the body as an object with explores the somatic and psychic that begins to move us in an unexpected direction. He cites a study by Menninger-Lerchenthal where a patient senses what is he

describes as a "second person implanted within his body" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 91). The description is a curious one as he describes this second person as distinctly female (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 91). Merleau-Ponty uses this example to trouble the intersections between the psychological and physiological determinants (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 91). He concludes the chapter by pointing out that "we can no longer hope to complete one functional domain by the other and that both must be presupposed by a third [. . .]. (We must) [. . .] pass from a knowledge of psychological and physiological facts to a recognition of the animistic event as a vital process inherent to our existence." (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 91). We have little further context in this passage, though one assumes that this may well be an allusion to a transgender, intersexed or gender fluid individual. If in fact this is the case, it certainly seems that Merleau-Ponty is very sophisticated for his time, recognizing the subtle interconnections between body and gender identity. He posits that only through a 'third' functional domain (i.e. the embodied subject) might we begin to develop an understanding of this as a vital process for what we will come to think of as being-in-the-world. I will elucidate this further in chapter three, by suggesting that gender is an essential aspect of embodied attention that might be understood in terms of presentation, performance, and participation.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION, PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION, READING GENDER IN ATTENTION

Setting the Stage: Gender[29] and Attention

In Chapter two we elucidated through an interrogation of the concepts of power and control the erroneous assumption of the mind body split in reference to attention. In doing so we developed from this the implications of this separation, and troubled the notion that the body might be viewed as an object separate from the attending mind. The result is a conceptualization of attention as a manifestation of an embodied subject – a being that develops meaning through lived bodily experience. Where then do we go from here? Freeing this embodied subject from a power based deficit, deposit, and credit model is critical, but still teachers are faced with a classroom filled with embodied subjects, and teachers are still faced with the task of teaching these embodied subjects. We are now left with the problem of the teacher as a fully realized embodied subject who

[29] I do not intend to approach gender from the perspective that there are behaviors that are inherent to boys and girls. Indeed, "this human way of existing is not guaranteed to each human child through some essence acquired at birth" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 174). The observation that the performance of gender differs between those who identify as boys and those who identify as girls does not equate to an ontological claim that there is anything inherent about gender, and this is a critical distinction that needs to be made. it needs to be noted that Merleau-Ponty's metaphysical claims about the body are not ontological claims rooted in essentializing notion of gender -- Here it is important to point out the difference between an exploration of metaphysics in relation to the body as subject and an ontological view of identity or gender.

can not ignore what she or he perceives as some sort of attentional concern on the part of their students.

Here in chapter three I will turn to the concepts of gender and performance to elucidate this relationship between the teacher as an embodied subject and the student as an embodied subject[30]. The added layer of gender and performance is key here, as I suggest that the recognition of attention in a student as an embodied subject is made more difficult when we realize that these students are always in the act of gender performance. I will further explicate this idea of gender performance as it relates to how a teacher might read attention or attention in students acts. Ultimately I will suggest a tension between valuing a student as an embodied subject and understanding that the student is performing a historically influenced act of gender performance. What is at stake for attention is that the act of gender performance influences (a) how a teacher might read attention in a student and (a) how a student might chose to demonstrate attention. Accepting a student's gendered presentation as subjective might then result in perpetuating a performance of passivity that makes embodied attention problematic. This chapter is presented in four parts. In part one, setting the Stage, I will identify my approach as well as describing my personal entry point for considering attention, gender, and performance. In part two, I will develop an understanding of the reading gender presentation in relation to attention while at the same time furthering how this presentation relates to embodied subjectivity. In part three, I will posit a pedagogical

[30] From Chapter two, we discussed the subject in the terms of a being-for-itself, and it is important to remember that this means that a subject "makes" objects in the world around the subject exist "for" himself or herself (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 389)

reconciliation of embodied subjectivity and gender performance through the lenses of participation.

The Approach: Merleau-Ponty Feminism, and the Body

Whereas I developed the key themes of chapter two by considering Merleau-Ponty's interplay with Michel Foucault and Zygmunt Bauman, here I plan to further our understanding of embodied attention through exploration of the interaction between Merleau-Ponty, Judith Butler, and Jyl Lynn Felman. In chapter two I considered how a conceptualization of the body and mind as two entities leads to objectification of the body thereby causing the body to be viewed as a commodity. Here I will consider the ramifications of a fully embodied individual seeking to be seen as a subject, or as Merleau-Ponty states, "to say that I have a body is thus a way of saying that I can be seen as an object and that I seek to be seen as a subject" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 170). This seeking subjectivity through the body is connected to attention in that the body is a powerful vehicle to making meaning of the abstract being attended to: "the body... transforms ideas into things and my mimicry of sleep into actual sleep. If the body can symbolize existence, this is because it actualizes it and because it is its actuality" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 167). The terminology that both Butler and Merleau-Ponty use consistently to describe this phenomenon of actualizing the abstract is constituting, or constitution. Butler elucidates further by explaining, "substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief" (Butler, 1988, p. 520). The

implication here is that action, or doing through the body, is involved in the conscious project of making meaning. This is of primary importance because I argue that, in a pedagogical context, there can be no being, and certainly no being-in attention, without doing, or performing. Indeed, Felman connects this directly to the student-teacher dynamic in the classroom by suggesting that, "[e]ngaging the whole student body is surely one of a professor's most revolutionary acts," and further points out that, "I have found the way in, not to lecture, but to *perform*" (Felman, 2001, pp. 53, xvii).

I will continue to develop Merleau-Ponty's notion of embodiment as I have in previous chapters, this time through his explication of the body as object>body as subject>body as a part of the being-in-the-world. This will be anchored by analysis in Butler's gender performance theory while using Felman's metaphor of the classroom as a stage to provide examples of the idea in practice. Here, gender works as a powerful vehicle with which to develop the notion of embodied attention and performance because, as has already been noted, there are far reaching implications for how gender participates, presents, and performs in classroom spaces, and how these behaviors manifest in often essentializing notions about the connections between attention and gender.[31] Felman's theatre metaphor extends this examination of lived experience as it presupposes the phenomenological idea that the body constitutes reality through performance, as elucidated here by Judith Butler (1988):

[31] (read: this is what girls look like when they 'pay attention,' this is what boys look like when they 'pay attention').

> A phenomenological theory of constitution requires an expansion of the conventional view of acts to mean both that which constitutes meaning and that through which meaning is performed or enacted. In other words, the acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts. (p. 521)

The lesson that Butler is alluding to here is that there is simultaneously meaning being produced for the actor, and meaning being produced for the audience. Here is where the theatre metaphor is a rich one--both the actual performance by the actor and the meaning interpreted by the audience are being produced simultaneously, and do not exist before or outside of the performance. Consider, then, the complex web of attention that is being developed in a theatrical moment: attention directed inward to the body as constituting the event, creating reality for the actor; attention directed outward toward the performer, creating meaning in the performance for the audience.

To begin I will posit two simple questions: In practice, does paying attention mean something different to boys than it might for girls? When attending to classrooms, might teachers identify attention differently in boys than in girls? If Timothy Frawley (2012) is correct in his assertion that, "teachers own perceptions of gender differences certainly influence how they treat and interact with their pupils," then what are the implications for identifying attention, or perhaps more importantly, a lack of attention in the classroom (p. 223)?

A Journey to the Feminist Stage

While teaching middle school I inferred that girls were easier to teach than boys. Typically both behavioral and academic concerns were raised about the male

students, almost never the female ones. This was a phenomenon that I didn't articulate as a classroom teacher, but had I been asked why this was the case, I imagine that I would have said something to the effect of, "girls just pay better attention." I imagine that I would have identified strongly with the teacher featured in the following case study from Andrew Wilkins' (2011) study, "Push and pull in the classroom: competition, gender and the neoliberal subject:"

> At Sachet's table, Radhak, Sachet and Stacey are talking and not talking to the others on their table, namely, Padmal, Ellie and Morris. Teacher tells the two boys at Jaina's table that they're being lazy, sitting back and letting the girls do it. (p. 773)

The teacher's observations are quite indicative of a general and pervasive sentiment--girls pay attention and boys goof off. What is telling about the observation in the case study is the relative lack of attention being given to the girls in the excerpt. What of their aptitude for the task? There seems no acknowledgement from the teacher beyond the fact that they are *performing* on task, and working hard, while the boys, the real focal point of the teacher's feedback, are being lazy. This view seems contiguous not only with my early teaching observations, but with my general socially constructed sense of *how boys are* and *how girls are* [read cis-gender].

A few years of anecdotal observation and a stint teaching high school, however, led me to begin troubling the essential nature of boys and girls. Perhaps most compelling for me was when I started noticing many of the young women that I had considered excellent students in middle school struggling mightily in high school. It seemed, at a

certain point in students' school careers, that the general idea of how boys are and how girls are in classroom spaces shifts, and I could not help but think that this shift went past general superficial observations about boyness and girlness, troubling my earlier observations about girls paying better attention than boys.

I refer now to a second case study from Andrew Wilkins' (2011) study:

> The teacher instructs the pupils to match geographical definitions …The teacher asks the class 'who has scored five out of five'. Mostly boys raise their hands. The teacher then expresses disappointment at the high number of girls scoring less than five on the test. She exclaims: 'come on girls.' (p. 771)

Note the subtle differences in the two accounts. In the earlier study, the teacher focused on the behavioral aspects of attention in the boys, i.e. talking while they were supposed to be engaged in a learning activity. In this account, the teacher is engaging in a formative assessment practice to check for basic vocabulary understanding. The teacher's rather dismayed response clearly illustrates that she expects the girls to perform better and seems to attribute this to a basic lack of effort, as substantiated by the phrase in the above quote "come on girls." There is no indication in the quote or in the larger excerpt that the teacher had previously identified a skill gap along gender lines, suggesting that she had taken the girls apparent attention in class as an indicator of mastery of the material, when clearly this was not the case.

To return to personal experience for a moment, I recall another encounter where I began to question gendered performance and teacher expectation. My first day teaching undergraduate students, a young woman came up to me after class hoping to have a few

minutes of my time. She proceeded to tell me of her anxiety over my class, explaining that my teaching style just did not match with her learning style. She went on to point out that the first day learning activity, where students worked their way through a short text on the construction of the teacher/student binary, was something that she was very uncomfortable with. She explained that, in her high school, her teachers would have taken the time to break the text down for her and then explain each piece in detail so that she could understand it. She also pointed out that my teaching style privileged those who enjoyed dialogue and discussion, while making those who didn't enjoy speaking out uncomfortable when I required them to articulate their views on the topic. I could not help but think of the words of Jyl Lynn Felman's writing about being confronted by a similar student criticism: "It's held in the body, I want to say. Your voice. The body. Your body" (Felman, 2001, p. 88). In that very body that I saw before me that day, complete with flush cheeks and clinched fists, I saw the promise of an articulate, passionate voice, being suppressed just below the surface by some unknown force.

This encounter led me to reflect on some of my past interctions with female students, and in reflection I realized that this young woman was not an outlier. Rather, she was one of a number of female students that I had encountered over the years who were uncomfortable with the enteractions in my classroom. In middle school, I remember girls complaining that I didn't explain things enough, instead relying on them to talk through ideas in class. In high school, I recall a young woman requesting that I lecture more and discuss less. In reflection, I wasn't sure what to make of this. As a reflexive practitioner I have attempted to adapt my instruction to multiple styles and

contexts, trying to take the quieter students into account. And yet, I ponder the words again of Jyl Lynn Felman who suggests that, "[w]e of the feminist academy must continually resist the often unconcious urge to enfeeble or 'feminize' our students by not calling on those who fear speaking in public" (Felman, 2001, p. 91). The embarrasing part of my personal reflection is that I fear that I would be more likely to encourage a quiet male student to speak out than a quiet female student – and I must acknowledge that I am complicit in this feminization. This led me toto question if (a) I enfeebling or feminizing in my attempt to respect those who choose not to speak and (b) if by respecting the quiet students by allowing them not to speak and allowng for there subjectivity I am unententionally creating a space where embodied attention cannot flurish?

Where then is embodied attention positioned in reference to gender presentation performance and participation in the classroom? Considering gender in this manor is a clear next step in terms of understanding the notion of embodied attention considered in the last chapter, as made clear in Judith Butler's, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," where she suggests "gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure… this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given" (Butler, 1988, p. 531). We now need to consider the acts which are considered as given more closely as we consider this notion of gender as put on to our bodies, and then ferret out philosophically what Merleau-Ponty refers to as the "confused forms and privileged

relations, which are not at all unconscious," (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 172).

Presentation: What We Read

Gender Presentation: From Essence to Act

While I am rooting my arguments in the philosophical throughout this entire chapter, as an entry point into an exploration of presentation it is worthwhile to consider both attention and gender in terms of what individuals present and how that presentation is read. In fact, the phrases to present or presenting with are rather commonly used in reference to symptoms related to ADD and ADHD as seen in the following example, "a child presents with some combination of over activity" (Jureidini, 2009, p. 357). This type of language is rather telling in that it speaks to the concept that the actions of our bodies are read in relation to attention and non-attention, and the audience attaches particular meaning to the presentation. It is not any great leap, then, to imagine that gender is also a part of that presentation, and that in the reading of performance the audience will, over time, attach meanings to different aspects of presentation. In reference to typical attentional and behavioral symptoms, the following quote is quite telling about this phenomenon of presentation: "all children, particularly boys, will present with such behavior in some settings at some point" (Timimi & Leo, 2009, p. 5). In just this one sentence there are volumes to be gleaned about the presentation of attentional behaviors and gender. While the point of the quote seems to be the universality of the presentation of these behaviors, there is a clear gendering in relation to how performance is perceived in the presentation. In fact, with a careful read one can

discover that this gendered interpretation of presentation is rather common in literature related to ADD and ADHD, whether it is the suggestion that "girls are less disruptive to those around them and are therefore less likely to be noticed" (Ohan, 2009, p. 651), or that "because they do not call attention to themselves, they are more likely to be overlooked in the classroom" (Quinn, 2005, p. 581). This gendering is often quite self aware, and justification typically includes an attempt to suggest the presence of an essential biological difference to account for the varying performances. For example, girls have more emotional reactivity than motor reactivity (Ba lint, 209, p. 1338; Quinn, 2005, p. 580).

To contrast this, I will argue that gender, rather than having an essence, is better conceptualized as a series of acts, as Judith Butler (1988) points out:

> My suggestion is that the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time. From a feminist point of view, one might try to reconceive the gendered body as the legacy of sedimented acts rather than a predetermined or foreclosed structure, essence or fact, whether natural, cultural, or linguistic. (p. 523)

By beginning to understand the tension between the duel presentations of the gendered body-as-object and body-as-legacy of gendered acts, we might begin to better understand the issues at play when working through the notion of gender and attention.

Through understanding gender as presentation, a style of life[32], we can free ourselves from the trap of believing that girls just naturally act in a certain way, and that

[32] The ambiguity of the presentation of gendered bodies and gendered performance described by Butler has deep roots in the phenomenological analysis of Merleau-Ponty

boys naturally act in a certain way. The challenge, of course, is to trouble the term *naturally*. By assuming that girls have an inherent predisposition to a particular type of attention, we are allowing for the perpetuation of a particular historical tradition that might be potentially disrupted though a different set of pedagogical assumptions and approaches. We must fully realize how "bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds" are merely a presentation that is learned in the context of history, and that these acts do constitute a fully realized being, but that this gendered identity is not fixed, and that "a feminine body has no particular essence" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 158). Even in the context of this quote by Merleau-Ponty there is an ambiguity, as he is in fact using a phenomenological method called imaginative variation to do a transcendental reduction of a variety--because he is intending the noesis of gender--meaning that he is considering all of the ways in which one might experience gender, and that it is at least possible to experience gender as non-essential, or fluidic. He does not take this idea any further, however, and this is where Judith Butler becomes important, as she extends and enriches his work in relation to the non-essentializing of gender.

Here begin to talk about the presentation of gendered acts, and why they are might have similarities in presentation along gender lines, but also how they might not. Existentially, I might claim to have the agency to perform however I choose, and I can choose to change my gender performance at will. Indeed, Judith Butler (1988) points out

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(2012), who states "ambiguity is essential to human existence, and everything that we live or think always has several senses. A style of life – such as an evasive attitude and a need for solitude – is perhaps a generalized expression of a certain state." (p. 172)

that "[o]ne is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one's body and, indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successors as well" (p. 521). Then why not simply leave it at that? Sure, we present our bodies in particular ways, constituting meaning through a series of acts and that these acts need correlate to a particular expectation, contemporary or historical. The problem is, however, that they *do* often correlate to a particular historical understanding of what it is to perform girl or boy, man or woman. Through previous examples we can clearly see that there is a gendered expectation and this influences both how an individual presents and how that presentation is interpreted. To claim that how one presents in terms of attention and gender is an existential choice and to leave it there does not go far enough, and I argue this because the historical constitution of gender is a complex and subtle one that often makes it appear that one is presenting one's essential nature, when in fact it is a constituted presentation. Merleau-Ponty (2012) alludes to this complexity by pointing out that "[u]nderstood in this way, the relation between the expression and that which is expressed, or between the sign and the signification, is not a one-way relation, such as the relation that exists between the original text and its translation" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 169). This is important because it speaks to the concern that the individual exhibiting particular behaviors might think of themselves as being authentic, acting out an original self, and yet this relational phenomenon explicated by Merleau-Ponty suggests that the presentation is impacted by the reception of the presentation, over time, and in this way

we might think of particular behaviors as becoming normalized, and thought of as essential.

This moves us to speaking to the specifics of gender presentation in relation to attention, and for that we must transition into a deeper analysis how this presentation of gender and attention manifests, and why it is salient to our concern to parse out exactly what these gendered behaviors might look like and how they are performed to constitute meaning. Merleau-Ponty (2012) also points out a need for this type of analysis, articulating that "when we say that bodily or carnal life and the psyche are in a reciprocal relation of expression, or that the bodily event always has a psychical signification, these formulas need to be explained" (p. 163).

Reading the Presentation

Jyl Lynn Felman brings us an excellent portrayal of this gender presentation, and brings us directly to a tangible framework for further analysis. Her pivotal work, *Never a Dull Moment: Teaching and the Art of Performance,* corroborates much of my anecdotal observation in relation to attention and gender, in particular the particular roles in which women present as a result of being born into a historical performance that has already been constructed around them. She also brings about the concern to which I have been alluding to throughout this piece--that there is a serious implication for the acceptance of particular gender presentation in relation to gender. There is, as Felman (2001) points out, much at stake in accepting historical presentations of gender:

> Whenever a woman is stuck in the perpetual state of an historically gendered, 'feminine' hesitancy, access to her voice is impeded, and her ability to act solely

> on her own behalf-to take agency-is immoblized. The question of voice and agency is not about essentializing the category 'woman,' or erasing differences of culture and class among women; rather abot resisting traditional, pattriarchal, gendered roles that limit female desire. Period. (p. 85)

This, then, transitions us beautifully from the argument against essentializing gender to the implications for accepting the traditional presentation of gender: we are enabling the loss of the woman's voice, and de facto, I will argue, we are also disabling a woman's opportunity to engage in fully embodied attentional moments. If we begin to fold in the notion of passivity into the discussion, then we must trouble the assumption that women are passive bodies that pay attention by sitting quietly and listening, without an embodied engagement. Here is where we must "seek out the various ramifications and covert signifiers" (Felman, 2001, p. xvii). If we are indeed moving to the idea of "the formulation of the body as a mode of dramatizing or enacting possibilities," then by simply following the, "deeply entrenched or sedimented expectations of gendered existence," we are in fact running to serious risk of limiting these possibilities (Butler, 1988, pp. 524-525).

To be clear, in our exploration of gender, presentation, and attention it is true that there are gendered expectations both masculine and feminine that create great difficulty in actualizing myriad pedagogical possibilities, and that in simply focusing on the feminine I risk falling into the trap of thinking about gender purely in terms of the feminine. However, as my primary concern is in identifying and analyzing barriers to embodied attention as discussed in the previous chapter, focusing on the issues arising from accepted feminine presentations of attention is of particular importance to my study.

Without a doubt there are implications for attention in the masculine performance of gender and attention, but as we will see further, this masculine performance of attention often leads to a masculine domination of pedagogical spaces which is perpetuated by allowing women to remain silent and passive. Felman (2001) makes this point powerfully by suggesting that, "I cannot pretend, as so many of my colleages do, that the academic atmosphere is compeltely neutral. Neutrality, as repeatedly illustrated by science, psychology and the misapplication of the law, is a compelte and utter fiction" (p. 84). It is with this spirit that I focus on the silencing of women's voices due to a particular performance of gendered attention, and in the aknowledgement of a simple truth gained from a question asked by Felman to her colleages, "Can you hear your female students when they speak? No…. Any trouble with the men? No." (Felman, 2001, p. 88).

I return to the previously mentioned phenomenon of the quiet girl who seems to want to be left alone, quietly, to learn in her own way: How do I, as a male educator, not take away this student's ageny, not impress upon this student my expectations for her, but still trouble her gendered attentional presentation? Recognizing the phenomenon of this presentation seems importnant even at the risk of making gendered assumptions, because as Felman (2001) points out:

> I think to myself that it is gender-specific and contagious, this weakening of the female vocal chord, crossing at will the boundaries of race, class ,and sexuality-but rarely gender. While the male chords remain relaxed, reverberating across the width of the large classroom, clear across campus and back. So everyone can hear, every single word. (p. 89)

How do we trouble this gendered presentation of attention and engagement? If we become committed to the notion that attention requires something more than bodily passivity, not to mention being committed to creating an empowering space for women to be heard, how might we push back, to trouble this gender presentation? What of the pushback from students who feel as though you, as a teacher, are violating their free agency to remain passive? Recalling the way that some of my students pushed back at my teaching style, Felman writes of encountering similar pushback in the form of angry female young women asking, "how can you call on me, when I don't even raise my hand?" (Felman, 2001, p. 90). The tension might be framed best by asking should a teacher respect the quiet student's subjectivity, or trouble their potential gender performance? This requires a further explanation of the very conceptualization of subjects/subkectivity, and objects/ojectivity.

Who is Presenting: Being-in and Being-for

As mentioned previously, we understand that there is both a practical and a philosophical problem with treating the body as an object. However, as also previously noted, there is a concern with treating the body as a subject, and this might well be perpetuating a gender performance of feminization and even subjugation. The problem here might be that as subjects, beings-for-ourselves we constitute our world by making objects exist for ourselves (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 389). A relationship in which both beings can make objects exist for ourselves is fraught with difficulty. How can I as teacher and a fully realized subject, develop a relationship with the student as a fully realized subject? Is not to do so to risk simply re-objectifying the

student? Merleau-Ponty names this concern by problematizing the very idea that a subject-subject relationship can exist at all. Jumping immediately to a solution here is to risk some serious philosophical pitfalls, so our next step must be to clearly understand the difficulty of the subject-subject dynamic. Therefore we need some new language, which Merleau-Ponty (2012) provides by suggesting that "Here there are two, and only two, modes of being: being in itself, which is the being of objects spread out in space, and being for itself, which is the being of consciousness" (p. 365). Now we have a richer set of language for this discussion. Based on inferring from the above quote by Merleau-Ponty, I cannot know another's consciousness. At the very moment in which I attempt to comprehend fully the embodied experience of another, I become an object of their attending. In short, I would then be seeing my own presentation through the eyes of another, and therefore I run the risk of reducing my own body as an object.

Using the metaphor of a stage, imagine an actress or actor preparing to present a dramatic rendition of a piece of theatre. Perhaps the actress/actor is known as a comedic genius, and the audience is expecting to spend the next few hours in hysterical laughter. We might think here of the notion of comedy and drama as correlate to any set of gendered expectations that students might have of teachers, and vice versa. Imagine the audience's dismay when the actress/actor begins to present drama when the expectation was comedy. In this situation there are several possible outcomes, and these outcomes will help us better understand the *being in* and *being for*. The first possibility is that the person on stage continues the presentation as planned; here the actress/actor continues to realize the state of being-in-itself. There is a fully realized consciousness of their body as

a vehicle of making meaning in the presentation. However, what is not attended to is the reaction of the audience in anything beyond a trivial way. Perhaps there is a recognition that the audience is unhappy, perhaps the actress/actor begins to lose momentum and become disheartened, yet carries on the presentation with dogged determination. The result is, as might be expected, chaos. The audience leaves unsatisfied and the actress/actor is unfulfilled with the cool reception. The second possibility is that the actress/actor recognizes eventually the expectation of the audience, and conforms to these expectations by altering the presentation. What then happens is the opposite of the previous example, and the actress/actor then recognizes the consciousness of the audience and actually becomes an objectified being-in itself, or becoming the expected presentation. If the situation were different, and the audience's expectation of the presentation is the same as the presentation given, then no real shift would have to occur, and the subject-object relationship would simply continue, but with apparent satisfaction for all involved.

So what might a subject-subject relationship look like? To begin with Merleau-Ponty suggest that it is "a contradictory operation, since I would simultaneously have to distinguish [the other] from me, thus placing [them] in the world of objects, and think of [them] as conscious… There is no room, then, for others and for a plurality of consciousnesses within objective thought (p 365). Returning to the classroom for some elucidation, consider the female student performing a particular role of femininity, let's say a passive receiver of knowledge, and the expectation of the teacher is that the student perform a role that requires her to be an engaged, embodied, and active participant. Here

we see that which Merleau-Ponty called a contradictory operation; if the young woman alters her presentation, she will in her mind perhaps simply be giving the teacher what they want, and making of herself an object before the consciousness of the teacher. But conversely for her to consider subjectively her bodily uncomfortability here and resist the teacher's wishes would be for her to fall into the subjective trap of considering her "body [as]possibility for [her] existence to resign from itself, to make itself anonymous and passive" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 167). In following this thinking, the body as texture or general instrument of understanding, as considered in the previous chapter, might lead to this counterproductive passive state. With this notion of passivity in mind, it is appropriate to move from the presentation as read to the performance as given

Performance: What We Are Though Doing

Up to this point I have been concerned with presentation, or that which we read in the performance of others. It seems apparent, however, that presentation as a metaphor has a limit; its principal flaw is that 'a presentation' can be construed as a noun, a static object that is simply created, given, and attended to. What is needed here to enrich the theatrical metaphor is a verb, or what Judith Butler refers to as acts, or action. Butler (1988) develops this idea of the noun or presentation and the verb of performance by pointing out that, "the existence and facticity of the material or natural dimensions of the body are not denied, but reconceived as distinct from the process by which the body comes to bear cultural meanings" (p. 520). This coming to bear cultural meanings is important as I, in the performance of being, actually create my being in an interplay

between that which is performed, that which is presented, and that which I come to think of as an actualization of my very being.

This performance plays out on the classroom stage quite clearly in relation to gender and attention. "While generally frowned upon in girls, being aggressive and requiring competition is seen as simply a normal part of being a boy, a typical stage in adolescence" (Frawley, 2012, p. 223; Myhill & Jones, 2006, p. 101; Ohan, 2009, p. 657). There is a normalization that occurs during performance that does appear to be essential, but is simply a subtle becoming rather than an objective is. Through years of performing and being valued on the basis of presentation, one's being is formed through the messages received during the performance. It might be fair to say that ultimately we constitute being not simply through performance, but through adapting to the reception of the performance over time. We might hold to the understanding that, "[r]ebelliousness, defiance and bravery are all constructed as masculine" (Francis, 2010, p. 484), but it only remains true insofar as the audience continues to expect this in the performance. To put it rather simply, over time we receive the performance that we expect, and in the performance the performer shapes their own being, "[b]oys dominate classroom conversations because boys are expected to be active and girls to be inactive" (Frawley, 2012, p. 224). Clearly, we see how this notion fits into the earlier concern raised by Felman, and how gender performance begins to creep into what we might think of as our very being.

The implications for gendered expectations of attention seem clear enough based on these examples; the boy in attention in an active embodied way seems appropriate,

while the girl in attention ought to look different, a more passive performance. What, though, of the implication of the body in this model of thinking? Merleau-Ponty (2012) again gives us a philosophical roadmap into an understanding of the body and its relation to performance by first suggesting that, "[i]f we therefore say that the body continuously expresses existence, then this is intended in the sense that speech expresses thought" (p. 169). This is important because here there is a pitfall that needs to be clearly avoided--embodied attention isn't simply about actively speaking. Certainly with the examples from my own experience, and those of Felman, it is clear that a loss of voice is of pivotal relevance. But, one cannot consider the voice as the only means of expression any more than one can consider passively listening as the only means of attention (indeed, as I will continue to argue, passively listening might not even be a valid means of attention). So what is the significance of Merleau-Ponty's comparison here? How is expressing existence different from expressing thought? In working through this we might begin to see the limitations of speech and move toward an understanding of just how pivotal the body is in terms of this expression of existence, and potentially even expressing thought. This really begins to turn conventional wisdom of attention on its head, in that expression through the body might be critical in developing attentional moments.

Earlier, I reiterated the notion from the previous chapter of body as texture, or general instrument of understanding. Now as we continue to unfold the metaphor of presentation, it is appropriate to return to the body as texture for understanding as we consider the body as also means for expression. Merleau-Ponty first points out that there are limitations inherent in speech as a means of communication in performance. This is

at least partially because nothing is really being acted, or constituted in the performance of speech: "the conventional means of expression…only manifest[s] my thought to another person because, for both of us, significations are already given for each sign and which in this sense do not achieve a genuine communication" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 169). Understanding that sign and signifier here are the representative object and its correlate meaning respectively, we must admit some linguistic pitfalls to this proposition, particularly as we know words are reified and often have additional attached meaning which does require something more than just matching sign and signifier.

However, in a general sense, this is both correct and significant, as speech is typically the most valued form of interaction, and it still might be seen as happening in a passive and physically immobile body; allowing the freedom to speak is not really allowing the freedom to move in general, and is still limiting the body from its full range of communication. Returning to the theatre metaphor, it is much like understanding that static reading of the script does not accomplish the same results as a staged performance with physical movement, sets, costumes, etc. In fact, it is through this metaphor that we might see an even deeper meaning to Merleau-Ponty's words.

Language, in the form of a classroom text or theatrical script, has the limitation of a particular set of signs that already have predetermined signifiers; through this line of thinking we can see that by tying attention back to a text or to a particular linguistic signifier without allowing for the understanding that the body has a pivotal involvement in expression and meaning making is problematic. This is due to the fact that, before language,

> It is necessary to recognize a primordial operation of signification in which the expressed does not exist apart from the expression and in which the signs themselves externally induce their sense. The body expresses total existence in this way, not that it is an external accompaniment of it, but because existence accomplishes itself in the body. (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 169)

This primordial operation of signification is the meaning making that we do as embodied beings. This is a difficult notion to truly grasp, as it seems difficult to understand in practice. The obvious position here is that our making meaning is a cognitive process, happening through the interplay between the sign and signification of language.

Merleau-Ponty is questioning this conventional wisdom by positing the claim that signification cannot really occur outside the body, and that our meaning making is inextricably linked to embodied understanding before language. Imagine again the actress and the audience. Consider the myriad subtle moments of bodily understanding that occur without language in the space between stage and house. For the audience, think of the moments of embarrassment when our faces get hot and stingy, the exhalation of breath at a dramatic moment, even the pins and needles when we have been sitting for a long time; all of these contribute to creating primordial meaning prior to language. For the actress, there is the churning of the stomach prior to ever stepping on stage, the racing heart in the moment of a missed cue, perhaps even the production of tears or laughter in a moment of character realization. Every small example might seem more mundane than the next, but Merleau-Ponty's point seems to be that it is always happening, and it is occurring before language, and it becomes an integral part of the signification of meaning, whether on a stage or in a classroom. Finally Merleau-Ponty (2012) brings the

concept together by pointing out that, "this embodied sense is the central phenomenon of which body and mind, or sign and signification are abstract moments" (p. 169). Here is truly where Merleau-Ponty develops the notion of performance as the central phenomenon. The embodied sense of making meaning in the moment, the action of doing is not an attribute of a mind or a body, rather the mind and the body are attributes of the action, or performance. It is in his use of phenomenological language that we now understand fully that neither the mind nor the body can be intended separately, understood fully as phenomena, because they are moments of the actual phenomena, the act itself. A moment of a concrete thing cannot be a concrete thing itself. In the same way, we might refer to going to a play rather than speaking of going to watch actors act, an audience watch, or to listen to lines spoken. "The play's the thing," spoke Hamlet. Butler (1988) echoes this by suggesting that, "The 'I' that is its body is, of necessity, a mode of embodying, and the 'what' that it embodies is possibilities" (p. 521).

Performance and History

To tie this back into Butler brings us again to the theatrical metaphor, we should further consider the conceptualization of the verb act as simultaneously an action and a concrete thing:

> But the theatrical sense of an "act" forces a revision of the individualist assumptions underlying the more restricted view of constituting acts within phenomenological discourse. As a given temporal duration within the entire performance, "acts" are a shared experience and "collective action." Just as within feminist theory the very category of the personal is expanded to include political structures, so is there a theatrically-based and, indeed, less individually-oriented view of acts that goes some of the way in defusing the criticism of act theory as "too existentialist." (Butler, 1988, p. 525)

Now we deepen the understanding of the performance by imagining it not as the body doing, the mind thinking, or even language being thought or spoken. Rather it is all of these things and the collective shared experience, both past and present. There is a world that has existed before my performance, and in that world previous performances have developed a collective set of meanings that don't simply influence my performance, but rather become my performance. The actress on stage is not only participating in a performance with other actors and the audience, but becomes a part of a larger narrative informed by the history of the performance. Felman (2001) points out that, "appearance on stage is not the beginning but a continuation of the given circumstances that have previously taken place" (p. 42).

To return to the concern of gender then, it is clear that gendered roles have a history, and this history becomes the performance, simply another moment much like the body, the mind, and the audience. The concern of the existential is an important one, as it cannot be thought that a subjective being simply acts out their individual reality. Their reality is constituted at least in part by a history, and whether we think that we are acting with agency or not, we are acting at least in some respect according to a historical script that forms a real part of our identity. Butler (1988) goes on to say that

> In effect, gender is made to comply with a model of truth and falsity which not only contradicts its own performative fluidity, but serves a social policy of gender regulation and control. Performing one's gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all. (p. 528)

The challenging of notions of right performance and wrong performance will become crucial to our concern in the final section of this chapter, but for the moment it is important to remember that this does feel strongly like something essential, something existential, but that false truth is misleading. Back in the classroom, we might say that a girl's assertion that she is just naturally quiet or the boy's assertion that he is just naturally loud might really feel a part of their essential makeup. But here is where we must return to the pitfalls of subjectification mentioned previously and suggest that these assertions of essential makeup can and should be challenged.

Now that we can see history's role in shaping the cultural construction of the body, feminine or masculine, and that there are "tacit conventions that structure the way the body is culturally perceived," we have to begin to move toward the implications (Butler, 1988, pp. 523-524). Clearly, conventional wisdom about attention simply perpetuates this historicity, and contributes to the essentializing of gender by prescribing specific expectations and solutions based specifically around these categories.

One clear implication here was alluded to earlier in the chapter: the student who believes that, in performing boyness or girlness they are simply living their existential reality. Now it becomes important to name and trouble the perceived subjectivity for what it might actually be: a solipsism. Merleau-Ponty (2012) warns that solipsism, an " existential commitment to isolation and mistrust… projected… into the conception of the world," is central to a realized subjectivity (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 361). Here is the heart of the concern in relation to an attempt to develop a subject-subject relation with a student--in attempting to see the student as a

being for itself we tacitly give permission to continue historical performance regardless of the consequences. Then what is there to be done? In this last section, I will explore what might be thought of as a third path, one that does not reduce the student to an object or allow the subjective trap of solipsism. Within the context of participation, I first use Merleau-Ponty's framework of being-in-the-world as a conceptual guide to develop philosophically this third path. Then I use Felman (2001) to consider how an educator might challenge students' tacit assumptions about their essential state: "discomfort is intrinsic to any revolutionary learning process. If I am to take performing in the classroom seriously, I need to prepare the students to walk on the edge of their particularized, socially constructed and culturally influenced 'safe zones'" (Felman, 2001, p. 24). In the final section of this chapter I wish to reframe the notion of participation in the terms of 'walking on the edge' of 'safe zones.'

Participation: Action, Engagement and Agency

I title this section 'participation' with some reticence. Sometimes a word is so heavily reified that it becomes cliché. My fear is that, in practice, participation often becomes synonymous with Foucault's 'exercise.' However, in this case participation is precisely the term I need because I genuinely want to talk about the action of taking part in something, which is at is essence what participation is. In order then to differentiate this from Foucault's exercise mentioned in chapter one, I need to take this definition a step further. Participation, as I use it here, requires agency: to be in attention is to participate, but it is not the performing of a task, but rather the body taking part in a collective action that constitutes its reality.

In the previous chapter we explored the concern of commoditizing and objectifying the body through exercise, and also that the embodied subject develops resistance, described through the metaphor of stealing attention. If we follow the assumption that this stealing attention is an embodied attention, then how might this have a pedagogical purpose? I am not advocating for a kind of forced embodied attention, as the other has freedom and the agency to constitute their own consciousness, otherwise this is simply a replicating of exercises. Rather than advocating the same kind of control that you critiqued in the last chapter, I will explore how one might encourage the type of attention implicit in the resistance, and this should be made clear rather up front.

To proceed, Merleau-Ponty (2012) provides us with a phenomenological description that can be applied when student and teacher meet in the pedagogical space, and this description begins by the teacher asking just how they (teacher) can 'posit' the other (student) (p. 374). He reminds the reader that insofar as I am born as an embodied being into the world, I might seek out and identify other behaviors that he suggests "intertwines" with our own (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 374). It is clear that in the moment of encountering an *other* in a classroom space, be it a teacher or a student, we recognize acts that correlate with our embodied understanding. In a theatrical context, we might think of this as archetypal behaviors designed to set a particular mood to the performance because the audience can identify with the significations. On the first day of any class that I teach, I immediately notice what I have come to think of as the *smiling nodders*. It is an image that many can probably relate to: the listener who is demonstrating what they have come to think of as the performance of

active listening. It is a performance that we give a signification to because, quite possibly, we share a lived history with that particular performance. The dissonance between that act and actually attending to intended objects, whether in a classroom or a general conversation, is apparent in popular cultural references such as, I smile a lot because I don't know what's going on.[33] The irony here is that it is still a performance that becomes accepted as signifying attention, whether or not this is actually the case. For this reason, Merleau-Ponty (2012) follows up his observation about intertwining behaviors by pointing out that,

> It is also the case that, insofar as I am born, and insofar as my existence finds itself already at work and knows itself as given to itself, my existence remains always on this side of the actions it wants to commit to, which are forever merely its modalities or particular cases of its insurmountable generality. (p. 374)

This is a powerful notion that gives credence to the fact that our meaning making in moments of encounters with others is extremely tenuous--the danger of insurmountable generality is apparent any time we deem particular behaviors attentional or non-attentional. The implications are a total misreading of attention. One can trouble this primacy of the visual in a number of ways, in the often-erroneous assumption that the autistic individual is in their own world,[34] or that the quiet smiling head nodder on the

[33] Key chains, bumper stickers, and more recently computer memes have all appropriated this cultural phenomenon.

[34] Cognitive and/or attentional assumptions in autistic individuals will be considered briefly in chapter five, with an exploration of Glenn Hudak's piece "Alone in the Presence of Others: Autistic Sexuality and Intimacy Reconsidered." In this piece he troubles a number of assumptions about what it means to be alone with others and the

front row is a model pupil who is giving close attention to the work. The fact that, as stated in the above quote, "my existence remains always on this side of the actions it wants to commit to" leads to a troubling question: can we as a fully realized embodied subject ever see more of the other than we want to commit to? Merleau-Ponty (2012) seems to suggest that we cannot, at least as long as we are attempt a subject to subject relationship: our own subjective understanding prevents us from discovering the true subjectivity of the other as we are always appropriating the actions of the other into our own historically constituted reality. He explains that:

> This given background of existence is what the *cogito* confirms: every affirmation, every engagement, and even every negation and every doubt takes place in a previously opened field, and attests to a self in touch with itself prior to the particular acts in which it loses contact with itself. This self, who is the witness of every actual communication, and without which the communication would be unaware of itself and thus would not be communication at all, seems to prevent any resolution of the problem of others. Here we see a lived solipsism that cannot be transcended. (p. 374)

Here we might posit the well-known Thomas Harris title, *I'm okay, your okay,* as an example. While it is beyond the scope of this work to do a critique of Harris's transactional analysis as a theoretical construct, the title alone illustrates the fallacy that has become pervasive in popular culture generally, and pedagogy specifically, that I can understand the other through my existential reality. Here we come to the real danger of allowing an encountered subject to retain the purely existential: I am really simply appropriating my lived performance as theirs. This flows into the central concern of the

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implications for perceived mind and body disconnects in autistic individuals (Hudak, 2011).

previous chapter and enriches it--you see, the embodied resistance needs to be cultivated--to say "let students be themselves" is not the answer any more than bodily objectification through exercise is. I will now explain in more detail that the opposite of power in relation to attentional exercise isn't total freedom, because this has negative solipsistic consequences.

Agency without a Subject/Subject Relationship

Iconic cartoon character Lisa Simpson once said, "as a feminist virtually everything a woman does is empowering" (LaZebnik, 2011). This powerful statement needs a bit of context and some explanation, but in its core we might find something salient to our concern. The statement was in response to her mother being perplexed about how her decision to let her hair grow was deemed empowering, but also how her decision to die it again was also empowering. Forget for a moment that we are referring to a cartoon character with a blue beehive and consider what is at stake here. On the surface, one might think that this is recognition of the right of a woman to live her subjective truth, but there is something somewhat subtler at play. Lisa, a character created and written by Matt Groening, is actually trying to suggest the importance of allowing for agency in the performance of woman. This is important because the quote is not actually suggesting that a woman might gain empowerment by accepting various forms of subjugation, rather that a woman might acknowledge that these subjugations are not fixed realities, rather they are historical performances, and as such she might assert the agency to explore myriad possibilities beyond these constructed performances.

What then are the educational implications for the teacher allowing students to ignore subjugations extant in much of the historical performance of femininity? Timothy Frawley (2012), in his article "Gender Bias in the Classroom: Current Controversies and Implications for Teachers," quotes a third grade boy, who frankly makes a remarkably insightful and honest comment: "The United States has not had a woman president because girls get a different education" (p. 221). This powerful statement by a child illustrates the concern: the implications for not resisting some historical performances are significant. Jyl Lynn Felman (2001) echoes this concern through personal observation: "I have to beg and plead with the girls in the class to speak up…the women speak as if the very sound of their own voice is terrifying… Over the years, its gotten worse, not better. The majority of my female students do not speak loud enough to be heard" (p. 88).

Returning to participatory attention, it is first important to note that, "it is through expression that thought becomes our own" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 183). The student must develop forms of expression in order to command ownership over thought, which requires fully embodied articulation through engagement, or participation in pedagogical acts. This is not about examination--embodied participation in a discourse that might disrupt historically constituted norms is not evaluative, but rather revelatory. How can one go about this? Felman (2001) articulates a vision for a performative feminist pedagogical approach that starts with the acknowledgement that:

> As a professor utilizing feminist pedagogy, I know that I have to resist the tempation to join the students in their 'premodern' helpless position, to take care of them, or to commisterate with their poststructural pain. I know, too, that it is

> up to me to tell these ….damsels that one day their intellectual and emotional ambivalence will ultimately kill their desire--if it hasn't already. (p. 85)

On Subjectivity: The Paradox of Two "I"s

There is strong sense of subjectivity implicit in the discourse on attention. The very notion that a person is deemed attentionally deficit has an essentializing to it, a tacit assertion that this is just simply the way a person is. The concern here is that deficits of attention become an individual problem that lead to the development of individual solutions. There is something problematic in the idea that any set of behaviors are fixed in relation to attention, and that individualized cures need to be prescribed in accordance with this individualistic manor. To speak of individualization becomes difficult, however, having earlier in this chapter troubled the conceptualization of subjectivity in the classroom. Merleau-Ponty (2012) is working within a blurring of the binary of subject and object which might lead to a rather new approach to the attentional being in the classroom to "form a third genre of being between the pure subject and the object" (p. 366). Accepting that, first, "in order to conceive of [them] as a genuine I, I would have to consider myself as a mere object for [them], which I am prevented from doing by the knowledge that I have of myself," we recognize that I will always project my being onto an other which makes the I-I relationship impossible (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 368). If we think of this in terms of the classroom, I will always have myself as a reference point for an other's being, particularly where I recognize difference; it is in that instance that I dichotomize the student as fundamentally different, therefore simply re-objectifying them.

Merleau-Ponty's (2012) bold stroke then would be to recognize the student as a series of constituted acts separate from my interpretation of them:

> But if the other's body is not an object for me, nor my body an object for him, if they are rather behaviors, then the other's positing of me does not reduce me to the status of an object in his field, and my perception of the other does not reduce him to the status of an object in my field. (p. 368)

Imagine a genuine positing of a person in terms of action, with history and context in mind of course. There is nothing particularly fixed about this performance, and it allows for a fluid relationship between the teacher and the student. This also entails an understanding that, while one cannot understand the other in terms of oneself, one also cannot understand the other purely in terms of historical performance. This speaks to the tendency in progressive educators, of which I include myself, to assume certain cultural oppressions and to also attempt to define a student based on certain historical repression. This is tantamount to me walking into a classroom with the assumption that I am going to liberate my female students from their historical oppression without first understanding how historical performance shapes their own lived behaviors. This is one philosophical pitfall to the notion of a teacher liberating their students: in this act we essentialize a certain understanding of the historical performance prior to the encounter. Merleau-Ponty (2012) points out that:

> The analysis of the perception of others encounters the essential difficulty raised by the cultural world because it must resolve the paradox of a consciousness seen from the outside, the paradox of a thought that resides in the exterior and that, when compared to my own, is already without a subject and is anonymous. (p 364)

So how can we proceed with our students as a cluster of independent consciousness seen from the outside? At this point I suggest returning to the performance metaphor. The performance ought to become improvisational: the essence of improv draws on the audience to craft the performance, and the result is an entity that is self-aware in its constitution: the entity is the performative interaction between two beings in the world, and then to return to the *Hamlet* quote, "the play" really does become "the thing," with the individuals serving as aspects of the performance. Felman (2001) reiterates this by reminding us that, "there is no authentic performance without the audience" (p. 13). Now instead of a student as a being-in-itself (an object) or a student as a being-for-itself (a subject) we have being in the world, situated as a series of acts contributing to the constitution of reality. In a pedagogical sense, this is tantamount to a decentering of the classroom (Felman, 2001, p. 9)

This performance works because it keeps open embodied possibility: "*I have* the world as an unfinished individual through my body as a power for this world" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, pp. 365-366). I, as actor, do not know how the performance will end, nor do I know even know what the roles are: certainly I understand myself as teacher/actor, and recognize my students/audience, but here these are no longer roles as the script is unwritten, being improvised as all participants begin to recognize themselves as, "a perceptual consciousness, as the subject of a behavior, as being in the world or existence, for only in this way will another person appear in control of his phenomenal body and receive a sort of 'place'" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 367). In breaking the being for itself/being in itself dialectic, or

subject/object dialectic, this idea of receiving a place is somewhat radical. Understanding a body's place within a history and a milieu is different from seeing a body as an object, or even a subject with a potentially definable schema. In returning to the concern of gender, this makes it possible to situate individual girl's bodies as performing behaviors, not as being themselves. Here the feminist teacher can begin an improvisational dialogue around acts of participation that transcend defined roles; in short participants can begin to find a place, not a role.

Thus, to parse out the quiet girl's actions by means of objectifying her is to assume an essentialist position, while to try to view her as a subject gives her an agency to accept her quietness as distinctly her, and only by blurring the subject-object dichotomy can this third possibility be achieved. We might then say that, no the teacher is not trying to make the quiet girl speak, but rather to create their own thoughts because this is not objectifying them or making them conform to a standard, rather it is the recognition that there is no ontological standard of being for girlness, and therefore you are not making them be something they are not, you are making them realize that the quietness is not ontological.

However, in reflection I realize that in my position in the classroom there is a caveat: a power dynamic between males and females exists. The forcing of one to speak might be construed as exerting masculine power unless the male teacher presents as equally vulnerable in the performance: "it is clear that I can only recuperate my being by forming relations with the other or by making myself freely recognized by him, and that my freedom requires that others have the same freedom" (Merleau-Ponty,

Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 374). It is here that Felman again becomes central to the argument: the performance of the teacher is feminist if, and *only* if as the teacher I acknowledge that my knowledge is not fixed or stagnate, and that I can grow and learn *from her*:

> What makes this performance feminist and not patriarchal is the fact that I too am transformed, even while in the process of transforming. There is continuous reciprocity on this stage between actor and audience, teacher and student. For this is live performance at its most electrifying, where the denouement depends on the students themselves rather than on the professor. (Felman, 2001, p. xvii)

We can only come to this moment philosophically, however, if we recognize this third state of being, not a subject, or being-in-itself, or an object, or being-for-itself, rather a being-in-the-world. Here as well is where I must connect back to the primary concern of attention. What has unfolded is a more sophisticated unraveling of the primacy of visual attention. In summation, there are really three choices in relation to approaching attention and gender performance:

1. We can choose to recognize the female body as an object, being-in-itself, and assume that this acculturated compliance is a natural form of attention--which it isn't--because from the last chapter we see that attention is embodied so we know that real attention isn't taking place.
2. We can choose to recognize the female body as a subject, a being-for-itself, that she is acting as a subject and that existentially her actions are valid, which is using subjectivity as an excuse to assume that acculturated compliance is a natural form of attention.

3. We can recognize the woman as a being-in-the-world, and as such create a space for her to realize her power for this world through embodied attention, assuming agency through the doing of action that allows the body to become involved in the world.

This ties us back to the concern from the previous chapter, and moves us forward to the acknowledgement that an embodied attention through participation frees the body to be actively in attention: "We are plugged in to each other. I know I have their complete attention" (Felman, 2001, p. 9). In this way we might fulfill Merleau-Ponty's (2012) vision of, "beings who are transcended by their world and who, consequently, can surely be transcended by each other" (p. 369):

> [The] body must be present too, active and engaged in the learning process. The body moves the mind as the mind moves the body. The feminist body, embodied as man or women, when present and alive, electrifies the pedagogical space. (Felman, 2001, p. 101)

This might seem like the appropriate place for an ending, and yet there are unanswered concerns. Both Butler and Merleau-Ponty develop a conceptual framework that begins to weaken traditional binary structures from subject/object to male/female. What if this binary blurring doesn't stop with these traditional dichotomies such as male/female? What binaries are implicit in traditional notions of attention that might also be blurred? These questions require the exploration of yet another aspect of attention, which we will address in chapter four, and will form our next principal question for exploration: how might we approach attention as being 'queer?'

CHAPTER IV

THE STRAIGHT PLACES MADE CROOKED: A QUEERING OF THE GATEKEEPING MODEL OF ATTENTION

A Reification of Attention

What is queer about attention? To begin, we must first reiterate that which is straight with attention-the gatekeeping model posited by Wu that suggests that one must attend to X to be conscious of it seems a fairly linear, or straight, place to start. Now, if I posit anything *queer* as *non-straight*, how might we find the *non-straight* in attention? With this central question in mind, I employ a combination of queer theory and phenomenology to analyze philosophical constructs commonly present in tacit assumptions about attention and deficits of attention. Why Queer Theory? To begin with, queer is just a brilliantly versatile word; I am queer, that is queer, and I can queer, all work as accurate functions of the term. For the purposes of this chapter, while the statement I am less concerned the first usage example (though it will have a significant place as well) and more focused on the later two usages. As Deborah Britzman (1995) points out, "Queer Theory is an attempt to articulate a thought of a method rather than a pronouncement of content" (p. 155). This is an important distinction to remember moving forward, because a typical method that I will employ is *queering*, where I will queer an idea by blurring preconceived boundaries of concepts or reorienting the perspective from which a thing is typically seem. This is useful for approaching concepts

like attention that have been heavily reified. Given the reified nature of attention, I am curious about tensions that might arise from queering of conventional understandings of attentional structures. In turning to these various models with a queer slant, I am more interested in freeing attention from a model rather than creating a new one, leading with the assumption "that the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose" (Haldane. 1932, p. 268).

If, as French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty Claims, "attention…creates nothing" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 62), why is attention in such vogue? The following references permeate casual conversations in the 21st century, in popular culture as well as pedagogical spaces: "Your child is having trouble paying attention;" "I'm having an ADD moment;" Sorry, my ADHD is kicking in;" Indeed, our appropriation of the phrases, attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactive disorder, is so complete that these terms litter our vernacular. Their use conjures an almost universal understanding of their reified meanings in our daily lives. What becomes troubling is how completely these phrases have become imbedded into both our everyday language and, more to the point, into our (inter)national educational systems. This is particularly interesting given the fact that the term ADD was only added to the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) around 35 years ago[35] (Guyer, 2000, p. 15).

We already know through previous analysis of gatekeeper theory that the common usage of attention implies that it is required for conscious acts, and that this is a

[35] ADHD was added to the DSM approximately seven years later.

purely cognitive construct. Looking linguistically at attention we can find the same themes; The Oxford Dictionary defines attention as "notice taken of someone or something; the regarding of someone or something as interesting or important" (Oxford University Press, 2014). The verbs 'notice and 'regard' imply a mental or cognitive action-one that might not have a physical correlate, other than the movement of the eyes across a page of words and pictures and the subsequent meaning making. Even in the synonyms used we can see an emphasis on the mental or cognitive: "awareness, notice, observation, heed, regard, scrutiny, surveillance, consideration, contemplation, deliberation, thought, study, observation, scrutiny, investigation" (Oxford University Press, 2014).

What of the bodies involved in attentional acts? Here is where I look to Merleau-Ponty to enrich our understanding past attention as a cognitive action, positioning it as "an annex of our 'bodily schema'" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 48). I will use Merleau-Ponty to help us move in between the personal, the political, and the philosophical in regard to attention. Through an exploration of personal queer narratives, political/policy literature, and various philosophical/cognitive models of attention, I seek to uncover a translucent tension in present understandings of attentional structures; this tension might be elucidated with the aid of the queer non-binary experience. I will accomplish this through two queer methodologies: first I will blur binary thinking in regard to attention and, second, I will explore the appearance of a reorientation of attention.

A Blurring of Binaries

While chapter three explored masculine and feminine performances of gender, there is implicit in this argument the concept that the gender binary is an historical construction rife with tacit assumptions. These assumptions can be challenged through an examination of lived experience. Merleau-Ponty (2012) reminds us that:

> Man[36] is an historical idea, not a natural species. In other words, there is no unconditioned possession in human existence, and yet neither is there any fortuitous attribute. Human existence will lead us to revisit our usual notion of necessity and of contingency, because human existence is the change of contingency into necessity through the act of taking up. (p. 174)

It is from this vantage point that we begin the work of blurring both the gender and also the sexuality binary in order to see how this queering of binary thinking might allow us to take up an understanding of the subtleties of gender and sexuality performance. By extension, we will begin to see how queer moments might manifest themselves in relation to attention. I take this analysis in three parts: First we will explore the queering of binaries present in both gender and sexuality, then we will connect how this thinking aids in further blurring the subject-object binary, and finally we will explore how the first two can help us find an entry point for understanding the queering of the attention/non-attention binary. In the momentum through these sections, the goal is to move toward something that might actually become a queer pedagogy of attention, rooted in the problematic positioning of attention and inattention as questionable binary constructs.

[36] I keep the gendered language here because, by virtue of the argument, the statement is true: man IS a historical idea, and so then is woman.

Queering the Sexuality Binary[37]

Why bother with considering the queering or blurring of the binaries of sexuality? Surely one might develop an understanding of attention without considering the queer? I mean to suggest that it is precisely in ignoring the queer moments in relation to sexuality and indeed gender that exist in the notion of attention that we might actually "anchor specific parts of our theories of the mind in the world. Without the anchor, theoretical invocations of attention will be like a boat adrift" (Wu, 8). Part of the power of using a queer perspective is to remember that personal experience that resists the normative does become salient in a phenomenological study. To develop a phenomenological understanding of a thing, the thing ought to be intended from multiple modalities and perspectives, or else we are simply privileging a normative perspective, or orientation. Sarah Ahmed (2006) helps us begin to understand this normative perspective:

> Spaces are oriented around the straight body, which allows that body to extend into space. As Gill Valentine puts it, 'Repetitive performances of hegemonic asymmetrical gender identities and heterosexual desires congeal over time to produce the appearance that the street is normally a heterosexual space.' Spaces become straight, which allow straight bodies to extend into them, such that the vertical axis appears in line with the axis of the body. Orientations involve such points of alignment. (Ahmed, 2006, p. 563)

[37] It is important to footnote at this point that I recognize a connection with gender here as well-while primarily in this section I will be focusing on the straight/non-straight binary it is important to consider its intersections with gender insofar as one's identified gender should not imply one's identified sexuality, and yet there are tacit assumptions constantly being made within these binary frameworks-i.e., that a transgender woman would necessarily be sexually attracted to men, etc.…

It is important to consider why spaces become straight. As suggested in chapter three, there is a historicity to gender performance, which invariably connects to a sexuality performance, and therefore spaces are crafted around these performances consequently shaping that which we consider reality. Queered lines, which extend into straight spaces, cause problems. Imagine here the simple act of two women holding hands in a street--public straight space. An act of intimacy, perhaps even an expression of love, becomes all of a sudden a political event. Perhaps this expression of love is even seen as making a statement or a ploy to gain attention. A queer incursion into straight space creates a jarring effect, and one that exemplifies a clear binary of thinking-that there is straight and un-straight. Consider this in the context of the following except from the Moss and Dunlap (1990) ADHD treatise, *Why Johnny Can't Concentrate: Coping with Attention Deficit Problems*:

> Children with attention difficulties may have all kinds of trouble when they start school, because all stimuli carry equal weight with them – the teacher's voice, the dropped pencil, the closed book, the footsteps in the hall, and the noise from the playground. Individuals with attention deficit have trouble sorting out these stimuli and selecting which is the most important, making sustained attention next to impossible. (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 2)

What if we were to reframe this in terms of queerness[38] and straightness? What if school has become a straight space, one in which many acts might be deemed queer by contrast?

[38] It should be remembered here that, as mentioned at the start of the chapter, queer doesn't have to imply content, rather method. Methodologically here I am using the metaphor of straight and queer spaces to point out that which is queer, or in Ahmed's words "wonky." Further, another method at play here is reframing what the quote calls "attentional difficulties" themselves as queer, inserted into straight spaces. This disrupts

The concern there is that schools are spaces where there are set items of thought and set ways to think of these items--the space that has been developed in the school makes un-straight that which does not conform to these set items and ways.

Why cast attention in relation to sexuality and, as in chapter three, gender? Perhaps the triadic connection lies in the idea that the performance of each has a history, and therefore this straightness of public spaces previously mentioned might well apply in nearly the same way to each of these concepts. Let us think of the straightening of these spaces in terms of fields. Sarah Ahmed (2006) brings Judith Butler back into dialogue by pointing out that:

> Heterosexual genders form themselves through the renunciation of the *possibility* of homosexuality, as a foreclosure *which produces a field of heterosexual objects* at the same time as it produces a domain of those whom it would be impossible to love. Ahmed, 2006, p. 557)

A straight space, then, might be thought of in terms of this "field of heterosexual objects" which is made available while at the same time there is a taboo domain that becomes queer. The word queer itself becomes a moniker for the taboo domain quite early on in schooling. I clearly recall my 5th grade classmates in elementary school playing smear the queer, a football inspired game. The pretense of the game is that a ball is passed back and forth, and that someone eventually gets stuck with ball as smear the queer is shouted.

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the representation of attentional difficulties. Deborah Britzman (1995) describes with aspect of the Queer method as occupying "a difficult space between the signifier and the signified, where something queer happens to the signified - to history and to bodies - and something queer happens to the signifier - to language and to representation (p. 153). Deeming actions of children as queer becomes disruptive, and allows for flaws in the signifier "attentional difficulties" to be disclosed.

The reality those who recall this game seems to be that even at an early age queer was a not-so-subtle coding. This coding is an opportunity to single out individuals who do not fit in the straight space (Loutzenheiser, 1996, p. 59). Even in our pre-pubescent understanding of our environment there was a straight space and a queer one. Nobody wanted to be in the queer one. In reflection, I find it interesting that I was called out on multiple occasions as the queer. Not because anyone had any clear indication of my yet to be articulated sexuality, but rather my reputation as the weird ADD kid.

It is rather fitting, then that it was on a literal field in elementary school that I first encountered the metaphorical phenomenon of the straight field:

> Defined as an open or cleared ground, a field that contains objects would hence refer us to how certain objects are made available by clearing, through the delimitation of space as a space for some things rather than others, where things might include actions (doing things). Heterosexuality in a way becomes a field, a space that gives ground to, or even grounds, heterosexual action through the renunciation of what it is not, and also by the production of what it is. (Ahmed, 2006, p. 558)

It is in this way that we might begin to understand (in)attentional acts differently. In chapter three, we considered the importance of people in attention through the metaphor of the actress and the audience. Here we might enrich this vision by considering the stage and seats in which the bodies involved in the performance move. Ahmed is suggesting that historical performance isn't simply a phenomenon attached to individuals and groups, rather it actually takes up space, inhabiting entire fields and tacitly dictating the action that will be tolerated in any specific space. In this context, Merleau-Ponty suggests that "[w]e must seek the originary experience of space prior to the distinction

between form and content (p. 259). This is a perplexing statement, but one that deserves further exploration. In the context of sexuality, we associate form and content readily, and distinguish acts as straight and non-straight within specific fields. So what of spaces prior to this straightening? What would follow in this exploration would be a deconstruction of the delimitations of spaces on the basis of straight actions.

And yet the fields are not the only areas in which straight and non-straight configurations are developed. We might think of an individual's sexuality as becoming through action in reference to that which is straight, or that one is only non-straight in reference to straight. As Merleau-Ponty (2012) writes, the "body has no more precise an orientation than other contents, and it itself receives this orientation from the general level of experience. This shows precisely how the visual field can impose an orientation that is not the orientation of the body" (p. 260). We understand up and down because these have been imposed on us, in the same way we might think of straight and non-straight as having been imposed on us, with all of the constituted performance that comes with these constructs.

With this talk of straight and non-straight, one might ask just what does sexuality have to do with attention, and does sexuality really have any place in pedagogy? While it is not within the scope of my research to fully explore the sexual and erotic in the classroom, it is certainly worth pointing out that implicit in the notion of embodied consciousness is the fact that sexual awareness is at least somewhat present in how we constitute our being in the world. If one approaches embodied consciousness as sexual not only in constituted sexual acts but also as simply another modality of understanding

the world, then we might think of attention as already somewhat queered by sexuality, even if typically considered along straight lines. Part of the irony in approaching people as sexual beings in pedagogical contexts is that we have a tendency to see sexuality as distraction, or fantasy that needs to be curtailed and redirected. From dress code to rules about keeping a respectable distance between boys and girls, schooling tends to acknowledge the sexual only as a thing to be repressed, rather than an aspect of our consciousness, and by extension our attention. Merleau-Ponty (2012) elucidates:

> By bringing itself into existence in this way, sexuality is charged with such a general signification that the sexual theme was able to be, for the subject, the opportunity for taking true and accurate notice of so many things in themselves and of so many rationally based decisions, and it has become so weighed down along the way that it is impossible to seek the explanation for the form of existence in the form of sexuality. The fact remains that this existence is the taking up and the making explicit of a sexual situation, and that it therefore always has at least a double sense. There is osmosis between sexuality and existence, that is, if existence diffuses throughout sexuality, sexuality reciprocally diffuses throughout existence, such that it is impossible to identify the contribution of sexual motivation and the contribution of other motivations for a given decision or action, and it is impossible to characterize a decision or an action as "sexual" or as "nonsexual." (p. 172)

To some extent, this brings us back to the core of our concern in regards to embodied attention: our bodies contribute to both our capacity to attend to and to make meaning in subtle and complex ways. This speaks to the concern of the making straight of classroom spaces. These spaces require the bracketing out of overt expressions of sexuality, excepting certain controlled moments when straight expressions of sexuality are allowed,

be this Valentine cards or prom-posals.[39] The problem, then, if we go back to Merleau-Ponty, is that sexuality is a part of our embodied thinking, and by extension, our development of attention. The very notion that it is impossible to characterize actions as sexual or non-sexual suggests that sexuality is salient to consciousness in general, and attention specifically. Consider the phrase, true and accurate notice of things in-themselves. Part of the complexity here comes from the complexity of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology: this osmosis between sexuality and existence suggests that sexuality in relation to attention isn't as simple as saying I attend to that which I am attracted to, but rather perhaps that attraction isn't necessarily a *conscious* choice, or even consciously apparent in reflection. This will become an important theme as we move forward. Much import is put on the notion of reflection and articulation in reference to attention. If there are subtle factors at play here, then it might be easy to claim one has bracketed out any sort of attentional distractions without really knowing to what extent this is true. A correlate might be made here to a main point argued in chapter 3, our historical performance might have the illusion of being essential much as certain embodied factors deemed attentional distractions might actually have the illusion of being set aside, but might still be very much at play in terms of making meaning before consciousness.

The value of queering binary thinking is the richness that develops when you are able to think past either/or, whether it is gay/straight, boy/girl, or attention and non-attention, binary thinking can prove terribly limiting. So what we might gain in this analysis of the queering of the straight normative view is that the problem with assuming

[39] Yes, this is a real thing.

straight "is clear: empiricism would willingly assume, through the actual orientation of my bodily experience, this fixed point we need if we wish to understand that there are directions for us – but experience and reflection at once show that *no content is in itself oriented*" (p. 258, my emphasis). We accept fixed points in reference to orientation, and the fixed points given to us are straight points. To question this structure is to absolutely queer that which is understood as fixed--that there must be straight and un-straight, that one falls into line or one doesn't. What if we understand that sexuality is subtly influencing our consciousness and attention in myriad ways constantly? Sarah Ahmed (2006) becomes an excellent companion to Merleau-Ponty here by extending his analysis, bringing the queer in Merleau-Ponty forward: "In other words, Merleau-Ponty considers how subjects straighten any queer effects and asks what this tendency to see straight suggests about the relationship between bodies and space (p. 561). It is with this in mind that we move forward toward a further examination of how the line between the subject and the object might be queered[40].

Queering Subject-Object Binary

Much was made in the last chapter about the being in the world, as distinct from the being of itself and the being in itself. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty (2012) reminds us that, "if I do not learn within myself to recognize the junction of the for-itself and the in-itself, then none of these mechanisms that we call 'other bodies' will ever come to life; if I have

[40] Binary thinking is a perfect place to apply one aspect of queer theory, queering, as a methodology. Here the boundary between two binarised opposites can become blurred. Remember that, in Britzman's words, "the queer… in Queer Theory signif[ies] actions…[and] can be thought of as a verb (p. 153).

no outside, then others have no inside" (p. 391). I argue that this is in fact a further evidence of queering in the work of Merleau-Ponty, and that this is extremely relevant to our concern here for several key reasons. As already mentioned, the concern in a fully subjective conception of a student gives a certain level of agency in defining oneself as a being for itself. Thus is the danger of developing a solipsistic attitude in the student that is reinforced by schooling, a belief that a student is 'the way they are' and that becomes an ontological certainty. Merleau-Ponty (2012) returns to the subject during his exploration of orientation:

> And since, nevertheless, it cannot be oriented "in itself," my first perception and my first hold on the world must appear to me as the execution of a more ancient pact established between *X* and the world in general; my history must be the sequel to a pre-history whose acquired results it uses; my personal existence must be the taking up of a pre-personal tradition. (p. 265)

Here we can see the difficulty of removing the individual from their orientation in the world. This notion of being in the world becomes somewhat more complex, and transcends traditional conceptions of subject and object. An object might have a place in the world, but that object has no perception of the world from that particular place. This is where a being in the world is different: I have an orientation in the world because I can perceive the world, but this perception is invariably tied to my orientation, which is tied to the pre-personal position that Merleau-Ponty is referring to. An object, then, cannot queer itself in that the object has no orientation, only placement. Much like the notion of performance considered in chapter three, orientation is important because it speaks to the non-essential nature of being--the being-in-the-world--as opposed to a subject--being for

itself--or an object--being in-itself. As a being thrust into the world, and in a world that has already had spaces made straight, it is important to understand that we orient ourselves according to the straight fields that we are inserted into, and that "we must conceive of perspectives and the point of view as our insertion in the world-as-an-individual, and we must no longer conceive of perception as a constitution of the real object" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 366).

Moving forward in our queer exploration of subjects and objects, it becomes somewhat troubling that we begin to speak of the difficulty of establishing real subjects and real objects. As I proceed in working out a phenomenology, albeit a queered phenomenology, I recognize that we are fundamentally beings in the world: the world exists and I am a being in it. Questions of real and unreal should not give unrest. To queer isn't really to question that there is reality, but rather to posit the pitfalls in assuming that we can determine essential structures of an object, or a predetermined nature of a subject: "Queer Theory signifies improper subjects and improper theories, even as it questions the very grounds of identity and theory" (Britzman, 1995, p. 153). Consider a student attempting the act of attention in a history classroom: The student is attending to a lecture about great American presidents and begins to wonder why all of the presidents have been men. Perhaps the wondering mind brings the student to wonder about the sexuality of the presidents or James Buchanan's bachelor status or even Jefferson's alleged affair with a slave. One might imagine that just as the teacher is in the midst of concluding the lesson the student's hand flies in the air, ready to unleash a series of apparently unrelated and inappropriate questions on the increasingly annoyed

pedagogue. This example, which might well occur in any history classroom in America, leads us to posit a few questions that might seem somewhat unsettling. First, what was the object of the student's attention? What should the object of the student's attention be? The obvious response might seem to be that the content of the lecture should become the object of attention, but then what is the essential structure of that content, and can this content intersect with the wondering mind or even the wandering body to extend the object's identity? Queering this example, then leads to questioning "the constitution of bodies of knowledge and knowledge of bodies" (Britzman, 1995, p. 151).

Imagine how easily the teacher might brush off the student's queries, or even reprimand the student for getting off topic. But, is that not simply reinforcing the straightness of the space by requiring students to orient themselves as subjects to specific objects and to teach them that they must constitute the fixed reality of the object, but as presented and not perceived? The problem here is the tension between two perceiving subjects and one object in a space that favors one particular perception--that of the teacher. Consider an example from Merleau-Ponty:

> Since I experience a clarification of the object through attention, the perceived object must already contain the intelligible structure that attention draws out. If consciousness finds the geometrical circle in the circular physiognomy of a plate, this is because consciousness already put it there. In order to take possession of attentive knowledge, consciousness need only return to itself. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 29)

This intelligible structure is, in this situation, a circle that exists within a plate. This is true, and I am fairly certain that, even if it required a bit of clarification of language, most

people would probably agree that the essence of the structure of a particular plate is a circle. Of course, we could further muddy this by asking if circularity is an essential part of plate-ness, and then we might encounter the possibility of square, oval, or rectangular plates. This leads us to reframe what attention does in the moment; rather than constituting the essence of a plate, perhaps attention is projecting onto the object existing structures in our consciousness. This might seem a trivial argument altogether, but at the point that you test me on knowing what a plate is, I assure you that it becomes relevant to me. This clarification of objects through attention is of import because it might be thought of as a common and often disregarded pitfall in understanding attention and deficits of attention. Our constitution of the essential structure of an object becomes codified and the expectations create a field of straightness again--you ought to be able to see the same intelligible structures in an object that I do, and if not, perhaps you were not paying close enough attention.

This isn't a flippant point, nor am I suggesting some type of subjective relativism--we can agree on some essential structures that constitute a plate, but what happens more often than not in the straight fields of classroom spaces is the disregard for the imaginative variation of plate-ness. Approaching a classroom space form a queer perspective allows room for an imaginative variation[41] to unfold, whether it is an

[41] Imaginative variation, a component of the phenomenological method known as an eidetic reduction, involves considering the possible variations of an intended object in order to text the limits of the essence of the object (Sokolowski, 2000).

exploration of different types of plates, or the clandestine love life of James Buchannan.[42] In this same vein that Sarah Ahmed (2006) reminds us that "bodies take shape through tending toward objects that are reachable, which are available within the bodily horizon" (p. 543), Deborah Britzman (1995) reminds us that "it is a particular articulation that returns us to practices of bodies and to bodies of practices" (p. 154). A queer understanding of content, or a body of practice, is that it can unfold through the practice of bodies, or the understanding that imaginative variation from the wondering mind or the wandering body can elucidate different aspects of the same object.

In concluding this section, it is time that we turn toward how a consideration of subjects and objects brings us to the queering of attention that will be further examined in the next section. To do that I return to Sarah Ahmed, who writes:

> We can reconsider how one becomes straight by reflecting on how an orientation, as a direction (taken) toward objects and others, is made compulsory, recalling Rich's model of 'compulsory heterosexuality.' Subjects are required to tend toward some objects and not others, as a condition of familial as well as social love. For the boy, to follow the family line, he 'must' orient himself toward women as loved objects. For the girl, to follow the family line, she 'must' take men as loved objects. It is the presumption that the child must inherit the life of the parent that requires the child to follow the heterosexual line. (Ahmed, 2006, p. 557)

Ahmed is playing two interesting themes together in this passage, and is simultaneously queering straightness and subject/objects through the notion of orientation. This is an important nexus because the assumption of one binary leads to the assumption of another

[42] Buchannan might well have been queer according to Historian James Loewen, and there is some fairly compelling primary source evidence to corroborate this claim (Loewen, 1999).

binary: to orient as straight as a matter of following the lines in the aforementioned straight field is also to be a subject that takes up people as objects. Consider for a moment the student as subject inserted into the straight field of the classroom. One can imagine straight here, naturally, to take on a double meaning. There is the expectation of straight acts in relation to sexuality, but also straight acts as related to attention as well. What ought objects be oriented toward within the straight lines of the classroom? Perhaps we might think of the teacher, classmates, or perhaps even the content as objects that must be taken up in order to follow the line. It should be remembered as we move toward an application of the queer that doesn't always imply sexuality, that "the queer in Queer Theory anticipates the precariousness of the signified: the limits within its conventions and rules, and the ways in which these various conventions and rules incite subversive performances, citations, and inconveniences" (Britzman, 1995, p. 153). Playing with the notion of the signified is relevant here as attention, as is straightness, a signification that is given meaning through a set of expected acts within a given field. If to queer is to question the straight expectation, then we can just as easily begin to conceive of a queering of attention and inattention in a similar vein.

How to Queer the Attention/Non Attention Binary

Let us return back to the conceptual framework of attention for just a moment. Wayne Wu develops a number of conceptual models of attention in addition to the gatekeeper model explored in earlier chapters, and in each one he continues to make linear connections between attention and consciousness in slightly different ways. He

suggests three ways in which consciousness implies attention, each highlighting different facets of attention:

> A. If S is conscious of object O, then S attends to O
> B. If S is conscious of object O, then S attends to (some) feature F of O
> C. If S is conscious of object O, then S attends to location L of O. (Wu, p. 149)

These are suppositions that are based on a link between consciousness and attention. We have already encountered the proposition that one can only be conscious of a thing if one attends to it, and now Wu extends that proposition to suggest that if one is conscious, one is attending to the thing, an aspect of the thing, or the location of the thing. The underlying assumption in each of these is the idea that if I am conscious, I am in attention to something. If this is the case, then while I am conscious I am always attending to something, perhaps even multiple objects, features of objects, or locations of objects. It would seem that what we are really suggesting in attentional problems is not a deficit of attention, but rather a perceived misdirection of attention. Returning to Moss, he echoes this point by suggesting that:

> When a stimulus is presented to the brain, one can choose to ignore or to respond to that stimulus" (Moss, pg. 14), and that "a child with a short attention span is going to be easily distracted, but this child can have a short attention span even when there is no external factor to distract him. He may just fail to concentrate on one activity because he is choosing to do, or to think about, something else. (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 14)

Moss's model for an appropriate being-in-attention is to resist thinking about something else, and making effort to direct our attention to the correct direction: "several stimuli

may be competing for our attention at once, since we see, hear, and feel all at the same time. Therefore we sometimes have to make a concerted effort to concentrate" ((Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 15). One might then make the conclusion "that the symptoms of ADHD describe children when they cannot connect to imposed expectations (Sobo, 2009, p. 360).

I have spent a great deal of time talking about the tacit power behind attentional demands, the difficulty of measuring attention through observed action, and even how gendered expectations of attention contribute to attentional performance. But now it is time to deal with possibly the most important question thus far: can we actually know whether or not an 'other' is paying attention? If we cannot, as already established, know another as a fully formed subject, then how can we know how attention may or may not manifest for them in a particular moment? For that matter, can we really know whether or not we ourselves are in attention at a given moment? As we ponder for a moment as to whether or not this is self-evident, let us consider one notion of how we expect students to understand and manage their attention:

> Telling stories, even factual recounts, is an active, imaginative process that requires the bringing together of memories, feeling, and knowledge. It helps us both to make sense of and to manage the arousal associated with ordinary, potentially distressing experiences, thereby enhancing social and academic function. Children need to be able to organize their experience into meaningful (coherent and cohesive) reportable episodes. (Jureidini, 2009, p. 353)

Initially, this seems a phenomenologically sound statement. Certainly we reflect back on moments, retelling narratives and organizing our experiences into coherent thoughts. We

create a smooth, uninterrupted account of moments after the fact, in reflection. It is also worth mentioning that there is an expectation to create meaningful and reportable accounts of our experiences, a posteriori. Therefore, if we concede that we cannot inhabit another being in the world to know if they are in attention or not, and the being in the world doesn't necessarily think of attention in moments, only in reflection of those moments, then the very notion of being *in attention* or being *out of attention* might be altogether un-provable. If our constituted consciousness only deems something phenomenally salient in reflection, then what of the subtlety of embodied attention in the moment that actually affects consciousness in ways which we might not be aware? What if we are not conscious of all that we attend to, or even all of the modalities in which one might attend to something? To begin to answer these questions, we need to explore the space in which consciousness constructs meaning, and where this space resides in relation to attention and inattention.

In our consideration of a queering of this attention and inattention binary, I will walk you through a short phenomenological reflection of the description of the act of being in attention. For the sake of this example, imagine listening to a teacher speak. You physically hear the spoken phrase, and you attach a signified meaning to the sign, and thus develop the phrase into an object--a piece of meaning, you might say. After the manufacturing of the piece of meaning, you return to the words that are being spoken by the teacher, but here is where things become complicated. While you were producing the previous piece of meaning, the next phrase was being spoken, and by the time you are prepared to make meaning of that phrase, it is already in the past. Therefore a new

phrase is being spoken and retained in memory while this next one is placed before consciousness in order to have signification put to the signs. In this process we might imagine always being a phrase behind, never exactly in the moment, but always slightly behind what is being spoken. Therefore our attention exists perpetually in the past, if only a second behind the moment when the thoughts were heard. Attention is therefore perhaps not best described as keeping the gate for consciousness, rather we might think of attention as having to pause for consciousness to become conscious of the attended object. In this way conscious understanding might be thought of as always just behind the attentive act, a second lost as every time a piece of meaning is being produced.

In the previous passage, I am attempting to describe what occurs in the moment of attention. I discovered, however, that nothing really occurs in the moment of attention; rather that attention must be lost to allow for the interpretation of what has just been said as the speaker moves on, always requiring the attender to catch up, or to always be a moment behind. Merleau-Ponty describes this phenomenon in *Phenomenology of Perception* as "the lost moment:"

> When a text is read in front of us, and if the expression is successful, we do not have a Thought on the margins of the text itself. The words occupy our entire mind, they come to fulfill our expectation exactly, and we experience the necessity of the speech [*discours*]; but we would not have been capable of predicting it, and we are possessed by it. The end of the speech or of the text will be the lifting of a spell. It is then that thoughts about the speech or the text will be able to arise. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 209)

In the section above, Merleau-Ponty describes what happens in the attending moment, and more to the point, what happens directly after. During the moment when one is

attending to speech, the attender is under a spell so to speak. Unable to process, the attender simply takes in the words. At the end of a piece of speech the attender can form thoughts about the speech, as if a spell has been lifted. The lost moment described here by Merleau-Ponty also informs the writing of modern philosophers of listening, as evidenced by the article, "On Pretending to Listen," by Suzanne Rice and Nicholas C. Burbules (2010):

> One can talk about the importance of 'being in the moment,' but the process of understanding language is active and entails continuously making reference to what came before and what one expects to come later. (p. 2876)

With this is mind we can see that in practice, sustaining attention might actually be to the detriment of conscious understanding. If remaining in a constant state of attention, how would one break to make meaning? I mean to suggest that we are never in a constant state of attention, yet the duration of the lost moments vary, and perhaps we even confuse these moments with the act of attention itself. If we remember that Merleau-Ponty reminds us that "attention creates nothing," however, then we must understand that attention must stop in order for consciousness to connect sign and significations in order to create the aforementioned pieces of meaning, or objects of thought. We will return to this idea of objects of thought in the next section, but for now we must put to rest the idea that attention really odes anything with relation to consciousness. Wayne Wu, Quoting William James suggests that, "everyone knows what attention is. It is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration, of

consciousness are of its essence" (p. 3). Perhaps we have begun to see that William James may well have been somewhat off base, as least partially, because consciousness is actively dealing with something in a previous moment while attention is attempting to be in the present. The other concern with the assumption made by James is the idea that an object of attention "takes possession by the mind" through consciousness.

Here I want to take a queer[43] turn: James seems to be suggesting that we can *attend to* and be *conscious of* an object as a *being-in-itself*, a fully self-contained object for which we can possess. In this way, it seems as though James is suggesting that attention naturally turns something into an object, fully contained and realizable. This would stand to reason if we remember that one cannot take possession of a subject, or *being-for itself*. So in this taking possession by consciousness of an object, we turn that which is attended into an object, but can that object ever be complete? Here is where we encounter a central problem in this way of thinking about attention: in the lost moment between attention and consciousness, how are objects of thought formed, and what tacit factors contribute to the formation of the object in that lost moment. In the Words of Sarah Ahmed (2006), "[w]e are reminded that what [one] can see in the first place depends on which way [they are] facing" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 546). Given all that we have discussed regarding how consciousness is embodied, we are reminded once again that the position of the body, or perhaps better thought of as orientation, matters greatly in what aspects of a thing are presented through attention. Further the historical understandings

[43] Here queering might be thought of as an unexpected or wonky turn toward a previously unexplored *orientation*

that influence signification matter greatly in the construction of the object of thought in the lost moment.

Merleau-Ponty (2012) accomplishes an excellent example of the influence of historical understandings through the exploration of a face:

> Turning an object upside down strips it of its signification. Its being as an object is thus not a being-for-the-thinking-subject, but rather a being-for-the-gaze that encounters it from a certain angle or otherwise fails to recognize it. This is why each object has 'its' top and 'its' bottom, which for a given level indicate its 'natural' place, the place that it 'should' occupy. To see a face is not to form the idea of a certain law of constitution that the object would invariably observe in all possible orientations. Rather, it is to have a certain hold on it, to be able to follow a certain perceptual itinerary along its surface, with its ups and its downs. And if I take this route in the reverse direction [*sens*], it is just as unrecognizable as is the mountain up which I just struggled when I turn to descend with long strides. (pp. 263-264)

Have you ever looked at a face upside down? It is a rather grotesque image: one huge gaping eye lined with teeth and a strange wet pink protuberance jutting out. One immediately sees a foreign and ugly object presented before consciousness. However, given time and a point of reference, we might be able to invert the image in our consciousness, therefore making some sense of the face as a face, and not simply an unfamiliar and somewhat scary object. The implications here are significant, as the face is only a face in a certain orientation, and in order to understand the face as a face we must understand the face as *upside down*. When thinking of attention, how often do we take for granted a specific understanding of the orientation toward an object, and assume that others have the same orientation toward that object. In the lost moment between attention and consciousness, we *imply* an orientation, just as we assume straightness in

the attentional field. Then what if my orientation differs from yours; does that mean I am not in attention? Now we have found the unexpected queer moment in attention and inattention--to assume that one is conscious of a thing by attending to the thing, one is assuming that there is only one way to be conscious of a thing-one orientation. Now I ask the question: instead of having either *attention* or *inattention*, might we instead conceive of multiple orientations of attention?

A Reorientation

Attention and Orientation

I come into the notion of queering attention by way of orientation. I readily associate the queer with sexual orientation, or more specifically with non-straight sexual practices, but also almost simultaneously with "what is oblique or off-line or even just plain wonky" (Ahmed 2006, p. 565). I agree with Sarah Ahmed that "it is important to retain both meanings of the word queer, which after all are historically related even if irreducible to each other" (Ahmed 2006, p. 565).

If we refer back to Merleau-Ponty through the concept of the embodied subject we might be able to see even more clearly how orientation is key in a consideration of embodied attention. Here Sarah Ahmed demonstrates the point by suggesting that "we are also orientating ourselves toward some objects more than others…[w]e can ask what kinds of objects bodies tend toward in their tendencies, as well as how such tendencies shape what bodies tend toward" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 553).

So what of attention and orientation, the connection to and differentiation between? Wayne Wu, quoting Jesse Prinz suggests the possibility that "orienting alters

what information gets in and attention alters where it flows" (Wu, 2014, p. 151). This idea forms a polemic against attention in a traditional sense; if attention is not that which allows information in, why are we not asking our students to re-orientate instead of asking them to pay attention? It seems then that our orientation *to that which is presented* before consciousness is just as salient as our attention to *how that which is presented* flows before consciousness. It is with this in mind that we briefly examine some of the literature of current and past ADHD research to flesh out the assumed attentional models behind the language used.

The Packing and Unpacking of Attention

It isn't hard to spy something uncomfortable about how attention is taken up in popular literature about ADHD. There seems to be something almost akin to an infomercial-like zealousness in advertisement style language. For example, "is your child easily distracted, disorganized, impulsive, and hard to satisfy? Is he or she temperamental, fidgety, or socially immature? Does your child remember countless trivial details but forget how to spell the words he spent two hours studying last night?" (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 1)

I find myself waiting in expectation for a pitch for some miracle product in a spray can that will cure "impulsivity, free flight of ideas, difficult feeling satisfied, high activity level, social immaturity, mood swings, performance inconsistency, and memory dysfunction" (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 1). If the specific examples of poor attention or deficits of attention are not enough, often literature will simply suggest that any abnormal behavior might stem from attentional problems: "there is no clear line of demarcation

between ADD and normal behavior. Rather one must make a judgment based on a comparison of the individual child to his or her peer group" (Hallowell & Ratey, 2011, p. 51).

The reification of attention becomes complete when additional nebulous notions such as "frustration with school" (Hallowell & Ratey, 2011, p. 63), the "inability to focus and concentrate" (Moss & Dunlap, 1990, p. 2) , or even acting "without thinking" (Chekes-Julkowski & Stolzenburg, 1997, p. 2) are posited as indicators of problems with attention. When "search for excitement rather than discipline" (Hallowell & Ratey, 2011, p. 80) becomes a reason to "pursue an evaluation" (Rief, 2008, p. 31), it is clear that a deeper philosophical examination of attention is warranted.

With an overemphasis on evidence of inattention from reviews "of the student's report cards, standardized test scores, classroom work samples, informal screening measures, …reports from the teacher, parents, or student," (Rief, 2008, p. 30), to brain research centering on executive functioning impairments likened to "erectile dysfunction of the mind" (Brown, 2013, p. 33), there are some tacit assumptions about attention that really must be ferreted out.

Primarily, it seems, that there is focus on what Wu referred to earlier as orientation rather than attention, in that attention is being used as a term to describe a phenomenon that determines "what gets in" to consciousness. This is a critical point, as the claim is really that conscious cannot be conscious of something without attention. Wu describes this model of attention as gatekeeping: "S is conscious of X if and only if S attends to X…This model provides a different answer to the metaphysical question:

attention is a selective process that is *for consciousness*. In other words, attention is identified by its distinctive functional link to consciousness" (Wu, 2014, p. 147).

Of course, this model ignores orientation. To suggest that attention is a selective process ignores that which we are likely to be orientated towards, and, perhaps more basically, suggests that consciousness cannot exist without attention. If this is the case, then not paying attention becomes an indictment of a student's very consciousness. Merleau-Ponty addresses this directly in phenomenological fashion by pointing out "in order for there to be consciousness of something, there must not be consciousness of everything. A universal consciousness is ultimately not actual becoming conscious but consciousness in principle, i.e., there is nothing in me which is not *conscious of*" (Merleau-Ponty, 2010, p. 117- my emphasis). One can extend this by saying that, if always conscious, one is always in attention. The key question at this point simply becomes: toward what are we oriented? This question makes an excellent departure point to move into the queer.

A Queer Interruption

Queerness, it seems, often has this habit of queering itself, particularly insofar as "to make things queer is certainly to disturb the order of things" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 565). In this way queerness inhabits in interesting vacillation between the peripheral and the central in the gap between the past and the present, acknowledging "my prehistoric connections with my native environment, I take them into account, but I recreate them, and I recreate from them through decision. I know my ties with the existing society and its defects, I take them into account, and 'the gaze of the least favored'" (Merleau-Ponty,

2010, p. 178). I imagine, in starting with a spherical metaphor that soon becomes limiting, that queerness lies on the periphery of the sphere of normative experience. And yet, aspects of queerness become normalized, heteronormativity gives way to homonormativity, and a new epicenter of normalization forms, now with the gay white man archetype in the center, and new peripheries forming. "In other words, for things to line up, queer or wonky moments are corrected. We could describe heteronormativity as a straightening device, which rereads the 'slant' of queer desire" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 562). Instead of positioning this experience as moving back toward a center of an existing sphere, what if a new sphere begins, this time what a new notion of normativity, interlocking with the old through the shifting of a peripheral point into a new center. In this way I might imagine multiple peripheral points becoming centers over time, further queering a binary notion of normal and abnormal. In the context of attentional moments, then, one might not be surprised to hear that a classroom discussion about my recent wedding to another man ended in the sharing of wedding pictures and exclamations of delight from the students declaring that my husband and I are "just adorable." This same encounter, which might have resulted in a radically different attentional disruption only a few short years ago, is now met with a normativity that hardly skews attention at all; one can almost see the formerly queer experience shifting to the center as students now create a new category for me which ceases to challenge attentional assumptions.

Instead, then, of dwelling on a past in which my disclosure of marrying another man might have queered attention in the classroom, let us shift the focus out toward a new periphery to examine a queering of attention for a present time. I will, then, present

an encounter that illustrates the aforementioned phenomenon of queerness queering itself, an encounter where I found myself in the center facing a new periphery where my attention was interrupted by an unexpected queer moment.

I sat on the edge of a circle of instructors introducing themselves on the first day of orientation for a summer program aimed at providing a critical social consciousness experience for rising juniors and seniors in high school. I found my attention darting back and forth between presenters and participants, my mind wondering and body wandering as I attended to how people interacted in the enclosed space, embodied consciousness' attending in multiple directions simultaneously. Admittedly, my attention was often drawn to a handsome young man sitting opposite me, attired in a trendy shirt and bowtie with those chic square framed glasses that gave him the slightest hipster sensibility. Happily engaged to be married as I was, my embodied attention continued to be caught by his manor, his presence ever in my consciousness as my attention darted about the room.

In the first breakout session, I was to learn the young man's name, and along with his introduction that he preferred either he/him or they/them pronouns. I certainly concede that even as a cisgender male, I attempt to make a space for the reading of trans in my attention to a person's gender, but I had earlier made the rather conscious decision to read the young man, as, well, a young man (Read: cisgender). The disclosure that he was a transgender man, while neither shocking nor remotely appalling, was a disruptive moment for me; I had, in my consciousness, felt as though I had read the individual wrong. The more problematic and potentially telling phenomenon was how I processed

the young man's gender within specific moments. Intellectually, I still understood his gender as male, but I kept slipping up and using feminine pronouns once I no longer associated him as cis-gender. I was not intellectually in conflict, but almost instantaneously I resorted to a default binary and 'she' became the word associated with the other that I was encountering, queering my read of his embodied subjectivity. In this way, my embodied read of gender became in conflict with a signification, and led to a series of queer moments when language became uncomfortably cumbersome; here I was, leading seminars on queer theory to high school kids, and inadvertently using feminine pronouns with my colleague. The intriguing phenomenon that began to emerge, however, was that over time a collected series of actions allowed me to again read him as male, or perhaps even non-binary, as I somehow began to formulate new entry points for the attentional moments.

To reduce this to attending to and then being conscious of, in a more traditional view of attention is to ignore the almost rhizomatic experience of allowing consciousness to be shaped by queer moments. These Moments of disorientation involve not only "the intellectual experience of disorder, but the vital experience of giddiness and nausea, which is the awareness of our own contingency and the horror with which it fills us….Maurice Merleau-Ponty gives an account of how these moments are overcome, as bodies are reoriented in the "becoming vertical" of perspective" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 544).

Of Fields and Spheres

I frequently use the term rhizomatic to refer to attention because, as a template for an attentional model, it is in a way the anti-model, or perhaps the queer model. A

rhizomatic understanding of attention would both require no pre-designated point of entry as well as allowing for unexpected interruptions and reorientations within and beyond that which is often referred to as field of attention. Merleau-Ponty (2012) provides a well-considered example of this:

> Consider, no abstract perceptions in an isolating attitude….but take up the analysis of the perceived world as being more than sensory. For example, my whole perception at each moment is only the relation of a human action. …[A]bsolute plentitude is the result of isolating analysis. [The] sensible world [is] full of gaps, ellipses, allusions; objects are 'physiognomies,' 'behaviors,' – [there is] anthropological space and physical space. (p. 144)

This language of gaps and ellipses, anthropological and physical space paint an irregular picture of something previously thought of as straight. Human interruption, intrusion into physical space, and the displacement of historical understanding -- all of these function not as a foil to attention, but as a manifestation of it. Rather than thinking of attention as a thing that lets other things in, one might consider attention as the space around consciousness in which one becomes oriented, a field, but not only in the physical sense, rather "imaginary fields, ideological fields, [and] mythical fields" (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 2010, p. 144).

Merleau-Ponty uses a field as his imagery, and this usage is apt, unless we make two rather erroneous conclusions about the nature of fields: first, that a field is of a regular shape, and second, that a field is two dimensional. P. Sven Arvidson claim[s], "that attention can only be properly researched once it is understood to be the center of a sphere of attention, a process that presents content in three dimensions, not one"

(Arvidson, 206, p. 2). This is an excellent metaphor through which he conceptualizes attention as being either centralized, contextualized, or marginalized (Arvidson, 206, p. 1), but the regularity of the sphere's boundary seems to still be slightly limiting. I continue to return to Merleau-Ponty's field construct because, rather than imagine a football field or a cornfield, my thoughts wander to an electromagnetic field or even a minefield, a space with depth, complexity, and irregularity. This field might be thought of as comprising mental space and physical space: a

> Perceptual or a mental *field* that can be "surveyed" or "dominated" (*Überschauen*), in which the movements of the exploratory organ and in which the evolutions of thought are possible without consciousness proportionally losing its acquisitions, and without losing itself in the transformations that it itself provokes. The precise position of the touched point will be the invariant of the diverse feelings that I have of it according to the orientation of my limbs and of my body. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 31-32).

The imagery of limbs and body moving asymmetrically about is fairly significant, and it is in this irregularity that one can see queer aspects of attention emerge.

A Thing is Not a Thought

The one other lesson that I glean from a queer experience of attention is that there is often an assumption that attention can be measured through retention of information about an object or at least an articulation of that object. This suggests confusion between object and attended object, or "the difference between 'seeing' and 'thinking one sees'" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, pp. 34-35). To make an analogy, something new is created when a hammer slams down on a thumb, and that new thing is the sensation of pain. Pain did not exist externally anywhere, and exists only in the as a manifestation of an event. While

attention creates nothing new, it is something, and "to pay attention is not merely further to elucidate pre-existing data, it is to bring about a new articulation of them by taking them as figures" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 30). I might well pay attention to that which I read by *Phenomenology of Perception*, but I do not possess in my consciousness that which I read. I possess that which I was oriented toward and attentive of, which has been brought before my consciousness and, just like pain being separate from the hammer, is separate from the object that is *Phenomenology of Perception.*

To put it another way, attending to X is not the same as X. The 'attending to X' (AtX) is in itself a new object separate from that being attended: "consciousness of field and field of consciousness, noema and noesis, or however one wants to put it. This process of distinction in attending is the same as what Sartre calls internal negation—attention to the statue is not the same as the statue itself" (Arvidson, 2006. 125-126). If attending is like a sensation, then the sensation of AtX is a *uniqueness*. Therefore, what if attention creates nothing, not because it opens the door to be conscious of X, but rather to be conscious of AtX? Then attention queers x rather than bringing it before consciousness. Somehow there are two aspects to AtX. The wondering of the associated representations and the wandering of the physical sensations create AtX. Which can then be brought before consciousness. If the fully formed AtX is what is being presented before consciousness, then one is never really conscious of x, only AtX. So what does this mean if we are judging attention by merely comparing one AtX with another, and the normative AtX is privileged? Therefore, to return to the hammer metaphor, what if we could think of attention as a sensation? A stimulus creates pain in the same way as the

stimulus might create attention. If you thought of it this way, then saying you have a deficit in the tension is as ridiculous as saying you have a deficit of pain, it doesn't really come into existence until the stimulus makes it happen, and then you're still not measuring attention itself, rather attention of the object or AtX. Merleau-Ponty alludes to this again by pointing out that, "everything that solicits the attention indicates a route that leads to it and is equally an overture to what it is" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. xii).

A Queer Pedagogy of Attention…Undefined

In keeping with the themes of reorientation and blurring favored in this paper, I might argue that there is no conclusion, or required exit point for a queer exploration of attention. Clearly, as elucidated in previous sections there are concerns not only that arise from limited cognitive attentional models but also with the implications of applying these models to educational practice and policy. In short, it is not difficult to see how the shortcomings of attentional understandings lead to classroom spaces where students are literally viewed as attentionally impotent. To adopt a queer approach to attention might serve to de-normalize or at least de-center privileged manifestations of attention in educational spaces, possibly allowing both straight and queer bodies to extend equally into the space of the classroom (Ahmed, 206, p. 563)

The challenges faced here are myriad, as a queer pedagogy of attention ought to remain relatively undefined, lest new centers and margins be formed (although the very conception of a queer pedagogy sets knew centers and margins). Central to this concern for me, however, is to explore more deeply how we privilege certain evidences of attention through articulation over others. To make queer the very evidences of deficits

of attention that the empiricists rely on to perpetuate the existence of such deficits is the next step in a nebulous movement toward a queer pedagogy of attention, continuously "concentrating our attention on the horizon of the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 59).

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WONDERING MIND AND THE WANDERING BODY

Scope And Limitations: The Project of Attention Revisited

The scope, limitations, and implications of my research is made clear in these concluding pages. In utilizing methodologies drawing from the traditions phenomenology, queer theory, performance theory, and Foucauldian post-structuralism, I seek not to develop a metaphysical model of attention, but rather to trouble the assumptions about consciousness that drive the discourse related to attention and attentional disorders. By extension, some distinct features of attention have unfolded through analysis that directly challenge a number of core assumptions that guide approaches to diagnosis and interventions of attentional disorders, specifically labeled ADD and ADHD. In this final chapter, I will apply these themes back to the current state of ADHD research, policy, diagnosis, and treatment in order to develop some conclusions, ferret out implications, and explore next steps in attention research.

Given the phenomenological nature of this study, I have examined attention as it presented itself to me, and considered various profiles and aspects that have enriched my understanding of attention as it is given through philosophical reflection and ADHD research analysis. While I have used power, gender, and queerness as themes with which to tease out aspects of attention salient to this study, these are by no means the exclusive

themes with which to consider attention. One notable limitation here is that race as a factor in understanding attention has not been explored. If there is a predicted performance in relation to gender, the same is equally present in relation to race and attention. Notions discussed in chapter three, such as silencing and passivity certainly apply in the context of race, as well as intersections between race, sexuality, power, and gender. In particular, the consideration of the signification of embodied acts along racial lines is a critical next step in the movement toward a more holistic and nuanced philosophical understanding of attention. For now, however, let us turn back to the beginning of chapter one to gain some perspective as to how far we have journeyed by returning to where we started.

In chapter one I introduced Merleau-Ponty (2012) with a quote from Phenomenology of Perception:

> Everywhere barren, nowhere can attention be *interested*. In order to relate attention to the life of consciousness, it would be necessary to show how a perception awakens attention, and then how attention develops and enriches this perception. An internal connection would need to be described, but empiricism has only external connections at its disposal, it can merely juxtapose states of consciousness. (p. 29, author's emphasis)

In this last chapter, we will return to some of the limitations of an empirical model for understanding attention and further considering the implications of an embodied model of consciousness, that is to say a conceptualization free from Cartesian dualism, on our understanding of attention.

Conclusions: Attention and Learning Critically Evaluated

From the first chapter, I have troubled the tenuous connection between attention and learning. In Chapter two, while exploring power and the commoditization of attention, I introduced the idea that perhaps there is a misunderstanding between the relationship between the mind and the body. This misunderstanding leads to a particular objectification of the body that causes bodily exercise to be misinterpreted as learning. I extended this into chapter three, and enriched the concept by showing how the bodily performance of attention, as it relates to gender, influences how one might confuse the quietness or compliance with learning. By chapter four, I was developing the ambiguity of attention to such a point that it called into question whether or not it was possible to measure someone's attentional level to begin with, much less correlate attention to learning.

Which brings me to the current moment where I need to address empirical arguments that correlate attention to learning: the current suggestion that attention is related to executive functioning, which are cognitive processes that have been empirically linked to brain functioning. This new component to the understanding and diagnosis of ADD and ADHD is an attempt to create a scientific basis for understanding attentional disorders, but to much the same affect as we have seen in the last forty years since the DSM first mentioned attentional disorders. The primary goal is still to position attentional disorders as being a detriment to learning (read: 'objective' testing measures), and that the next approach ought to be to implement interventions, with medication being a central component: "children treated with stimulant medications had higher test scores

for reading" (Brown, 2013, p. 13). While it is not especially my goal to discount objective assessment based learning measures, it is certainly relevant to remember that I have posed a number of concerns throughout this study that directly question the feasibility of correlating attention with meeting measured learning goals. Because of the complexities of meaning making in relation to the thinking body in chapters 2 and 3, and how consciousness works in the most moment as discussed in chapter 4, there are immense problems with correlating a student's attention with their performance in demonstrating learning goals. This is specifically evident in Brown's own words: "Interestingly, children diagnosed with combined type ADHD at ages four to six years old did not show the lower scores that were seen in those with predominately inattentive type of ADHD" (Brown, 2013, p. 111). This is very important for a number of reasons. First, Brown posits this as a curiosity, but yet I believe he fails to adequately explore this disconnect. My central concern here is that Brown fails to thoroughly explore the difference between simply being inattentive and inattentiveness coupled with hyperactivity. Being posited here is a separation between the wondering mind and the wandering body. What Brown simply deems as interesting, I deem as a central concern--our bodies are inexorably linked to attention, and those who sit in passive inattention are overlooked, while those who are in active movement are controlled. If attention and consciousness are linked with the body as a mode for producing meaning, then we might consider for a moment the inattentive student as being in a type of solipsism, retreating into a wondering mind, failing to engage with the classroom as a space of-the-world. Instead of considering ways to develop a classroom space that would allow for this

student to become physically engaged, the emphasis becomes controlling the bodies of those deemed hyperactive. Do the wandering bodies of some distract us from the wondering minds of others? And if so what benefit is there to pathologizing either, with a view to bring each into some normalized notion of what a classroom ought to be? In this sense we might see the body and the mind as having been reduced to objects that need to be made to perform in particular ways in order to produce a desired result.

And yet the effort to extend this objectification continues by using science to reduce both phenomena to biological *functions*, by framing the behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD into a developmental impairment of executive functions--effort, emotion, focus, activation (organization), memory and self regulated action (Brown, 2013, p. 23). We really must step back for a moment and consider the dangerous implications of this essentialist thinking. Now it is clear what is at stake in the debate over attention--we risk essentializing behaviors in a positivist senses, and this allows systems of power to justify totally separating the being from the world.

Knowing what is at stake, it is important to flesh out some of the problems inherent in assuming that "[i]mpairments of executive function associated with the new model of ADHD play an important role in each of the primary learning disorders" (Brown, 2013, p. 136). Making this leap in connecting a given cognitive impairment to the very *ability* to learn, really must be further considered because, if this is true, then developing interventions from medicine to remedial educational environments might seem like a positive step. However, if untrue, or even *sometimes* untrue, then the

implications of this approach might well be extremely detrimental to the very students that we seek to help.

I will start with the very assumption that issues stemming from attention have a direct bearing on learning, and to do this I will go back to the deceptively important concept of co-morbidity. Brown (2013) indicates that, drawing from a 2000 Mayes, Calhoun and Crowell study, "[c]hildren with LD and ADHD had more severe learning problems than children who had LD without ADHD… Learning and attention problems…usually coexist" (p. 136). The major point of note in this quote is the implication that one objective *disorder* has direct bearing on another distinct and separable disorder. I am drawn to Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that "insofar as I have a body, I can be reduced to an object beneath the gaze of another person and no longer count for him as a person" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 170). I come back to this point of objectification because Brown is suggesting that we can thematize sets of attributes and create things – this is much like taking a moment and intending it as a separate object, becoming a concrete thing (Sokolowski, Introduction to phenomenology, 2000, p. 23). That is to say, we take a set of attributes from individual beings and give them a name, pathologizing the attributes as an *it* and then take a slightly different set of attributes from the same individuals and also pathologizing them as an it, and then remarking on the significance that these its tend to occur in similar populations. To return to Merleau-Ponty, we have now taken beings-in-the-world and reduced them to objects, and then further isolated moments from their existence and reduced them to objects as well, and then we use data from subsequent observations to make conclusions

that are designed to be applicable to others to which similar objects are attributed. While in this critical analysis I do not mean to suggest that empirical research is not useful, yet it is critical that philosophy become a tool for troubling the waters of empirical truth in order that we might confront that to which *the evidence* has blinded us. Within the context of our current "fetish for methods" and the seemingly empirical "Scientificity" of data driven educational policy, it is all the more necessary for philosophy to uncover that which is perhaps currently immeasurable, but no less salient to pedagogical concerns (Lather, 2012, p. 557; Macedo, 2007, p. 394).

Returning to executive functioning, Brown further suggests, "two executive functions, working memory and processing speed, have been shown in multiple studies to be central to reading as well as to ADHD" (Brown, 2013, p. 136). We might again point out that he has removed a moment from an object by considering memory and processing speed to be intend-able objects separate from the being that performs them, but now there is another component that needs to be considered, and that is that memory and processing are attributes of consciousness. Consider for a moment these attributes of being able to remember and to process ideas a bit more closely. If we think of these attributes as central aspects of both thinking and consciousness, then we must also remember that consciousness does not exist independent of an object of consciousness: "consciousness is no less intimately connected to the objects with which it distracts itself than it is to the ones in which it takes an interest" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 30). In short, consciousness is always conscious of something. This is a critical point, as we can, by extension, suggest that neither memory nor processing can be thought of as

an object in-itself, because memory is always *memory of* and processing is always *processing of*. Many of us might recall making statements similar to "I can remember random bits of trivia that I learned years ago but I can't remember what I ate for breakfast," or "I don't have a head for numbers, but I can understand complicated texts with ease." What we are admitting to here is critical: it suggests that the objects of consciousness are relevant to the processes of consciousness. In short, whether or not you call a thing an executive function doesn't separate the consciousness from the object of consciousness. So here I might make the bold leap into suggesting that, rather than view the body as an object ruled by the mind's objective executive functions, I might view the body as a subject involved intimately with a world of objects, past and present, being attended to:

> Since, nevertheless, it cannot be oriented "in itself," my first perception and my first hold on the world must appear to me as the execution of a more ancient pact established between X and the world in general; my history must be the sequel to a pre-history whose acquired results it uses; my personal existence must be the taking up of a pre-personal tradition. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 265)

Here we might see more clearly the problem with measuring executive functions as stand-alone objects: it ignores the personal and pre-personal history of the being-in-the-world. With this in mind we now might begin to trouble the possibility that *memory* and *processing* are measurable as objects removed from their contexts.

Reading is a key area where attention is deemed critical, and it should be noted that in the same aforementioned Mayes, Calhoun and Crowell (2000) study, the majority of the learning disabilities that overlapped with ADD and ADHD were related to reading

difficulties (Brown, 2013, p. 136). Brown goes on to suggest that "reading must now be understood as involving also attentional mechanisms that are essential to fluency and automaticity in reading….for both encoding and retrieval, attention is central'" (Brown, 2013, p. 137). Think for a moment about what happens when you read. I know that my experience typically involves the formation of moving images, and these come from the pieces or objects of thought that I form while reading. I image that, while varying somewhat from person to person, your experience might be similar. One might assume, then, that we are each directors of our own film, and constitute understanding in different ways, which inform the production of each film. Here is where this metaphor breaks down, though: I cannot watch your film, and you cannot watch mine. This is a simple but profound thought that Merleau-Ponty articulates thusly:

> If the subject's only experience is the one I obtain by coinciding with it, if the mind, by definition, eludes the "outside spectator" and can only be recognized inwardly, then my *Cogito* is, in principle, unique – no one else could "participate" in it. Might one respond by saying that it is rather "transferable" to others? But how could such a transfer ever be motivated? What spectacle will ever truly be able to induce me to posit outside of myself this mode of existence whose sense requires that it be grasped inwardly? (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 391)

And here becomes a serious concern with measuring a person's ability to encode and retrieve: we return to the problem of attentional evidence, this time with the emphasis on the potential disconnect between thinking and the articulation of thought. It is one thing to claim a problem with expression, but to make a claim on a person's thinking is philosophically problematic, as is evidenced in Merleau-Ponty's quote. This makes any correlation between attention and cognition very difficult because of the inherent

difficulties in assessing cognition. The distinction here is the difference between evidenced learning and cognitive ability. One might well make the claim that cognition is irrelevant unless it is demonstrable, but then naming becomes important--what we are then talking about is an *articulation* problem, not necessarily a thinking problem

The final point that I will consider in this section is the aforementioned notion of effort, or motivation, as an executive function. To suggest that effort is tied to a biologically dictated executive function is making the claim that motivation is an ontological given. While clearly there are a number of crucial factors that might dictate a person's motivation, to argue that some are inherently motivated and others are not is not only problematic, but I would go a step further and say potentially dangerous. Brown (2013) frames the connection between attentional motivation and learning thusly: "[t]he emphasis upon arousal, activation, and selective attention points to the critical, but often neglected, problem of motivation for reading, writing, and math" (p. 139). A part of what makes this more complex than one might previously think is the suggestion that motivation and effort are not actually conscious, but are rather unconscious, exhibiting what brown refers to as automaticity (Brown, 2013, p. 34). In short, Brown seems to be arguing that those diagnosed with ADD and ADHD may be unable to control their own effort and motivation, leading to difficulties in reading items with which they are disinterested. The first concern here is that, in relation to learning, it seems a difficult leap to suggest that motivation has a relation to a cognitive ability to make meaning through written text. My next and possibly central concern is the assumption that there is a normal level of effort and motivation to which one could compare the deficit. In other

words, what level of motivation and effort ought a person demonstrate who has no executive function impairment? At what point is motivation and effort here conflated with docility and compliance? Further, to suggest that motivation is unconscious seems to deprive an individual of a certain amount of agency, as Merleau-Ponty elucidates by suggesting, "motivation does not suppress freedom" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 473). To read something that one finds uninteresting is certainly not pleasant, but it is possible. My motivation to do or not do a thing does not take away my freedom or my ability to choose. Merleau-Ponty (2012) explicates this well by pointing out that:

> Motivations incline me in a certain direction, then there are only two possibilities: either they have the force to make me act, in which case there is no freedom, or they do not have this force, in which case my freedom is total, as great in the worst tortures as in the peace of my home. We would thus have to renounce not only the idea of causality, but even the idea of motivation. The supposed motive does not weigh on my decision; rather, my decision lends the motivation its force. (p. 459)

What this excerpt develops quite well is the notion that there is a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy that is implicit in the connection between motivation and learning. To be inclined towards or away from something does not necessarily imply action either way. To claim a motivational impairment, then, might not necessarily have any bearing on the learning in *action*. In this way we must understand that motivation, indeed effort as well, are not things, but rather attitudes, and therefore can't really be seen as impairments of the action of learning, thinking, or cognition.

Implications: 'Dealing with' Attention (Diagnosis and Treatment)

How Spaces Become Straight

It is clear throughout each of these chapters that there are philosophical pitfalls to our current and traditional approaches to attention and deficits of attention. From the objectification of bodies, to assumptions about the mind and the body, through notions of how attention even interacts with consciousness, it is clear that there are gaps in our current understandings of attention. So why is this philosophical examination of attention so important? How we understand and approach attention does not end with philosophical discourse; there are far reaching concrete implications for our approach to attention that are significantly impacting education spaces right now. The fact is that we are not talking about a marginal concern in modern education: Visser et al (2014), in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* reported that, in 2011, 11 percent of school aged children had been given a diagnosis of ADHD at some point in their lives (Visser, et al., 2014). This is truly a staggeringly significant segment of school-aged children.

This means that by 2011, 6.4 million school-aged children received the diagnosis of ADHD, and over half of these, well over 3 million children, were taking medication for the disorder (Visser, et al., 2014). Based on the same study, diagnoses have been steadily increasing by 5 percent every year since 2003 (Visser, et al., 2014). Now compare this with the fact that the DSM 5 estimates that roughly 5 percent of school age children actually have ADHD, and you are looking at a significant disconnect (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). So why are there twice as many diagnoses as the DSM 5

predicts? Why are ADHD diagnoses increasing at such a rate, and why are certain interventions, such as medication, favored over others? To work toward an understanding of this, it is worth examining briefly educational policy as it relates to ADD and ADHD, starting first with national level policy and moving toward more local policy. The federal government has two pieces of legislation that directly speak to students with behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD, and these are section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. While it should be apparent at this point that the spirit of both of these acts seems to be clearly to provide what is best for kids, the policy that stems from it often does not hit the mark for a number of reasons, funding and accountability being central to these. Section 504 of the rehabilitation Act of 1973 reads:

> No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 705 (20) of this title, shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency. (United States Department of Labor, 2014)

To provide clarity here, section 705 of the act defines the term disability as "a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment" (Pg. 182 of title 29). The lack of specificity here is striking, and one can't help but notice that this leaves open the possibility for local and state agencies to define impairment and/or impediment in a variety of different ways.

This is important because "although there are no federal funds flowing from section 504, failure to comply with its requirements will result in the withdrawal of federal funds" (McEwan, 1998, p. 25). This now constitutes concern for those who make local policy in relation to section 504, and certainly requires caution, as no state or local agency wants funding cut. McEwan (1998) goes on to point out that, in order to be compliant with this law and not lose funding, a 504 plan is developed for individual students in order to respond to their disability under the act (p. 28). A 504 plan essentially lists student behaviors noted and a plan of best practices and accommodations that must be implemented in the students classrooms, and more to the point, must be carried on when the students is tested in any official capacity (McEwan, 1998, p. 73-74).

The second act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, requires states to develop a plan to address the needs of children with disabilities:

> The application shall include a plan that identifies and addresses the State and local needs for the personnel preparation and professional development of personnel, as well as individuals who provide direct supplementary aids and services to children with disabilities. (108th Congress Public Law , 2004)

There are essentially four basic tiers of interventions that are typically used under IDEA, and these are tiered up based on the severity of the disability. The first tier is inclusive education, and this is where a student stays in the classroom with all types of students and the teacher is supported by an inclusion specialist (McEwan, 1998, p. 28-29). This intervention is attractive as it designates students under the act, yet requires relatively fewer resources in terms of funding than the other options. The next is a pull out option,

often refereed to as a resource room, and this is where the student is pulled out of the mainstream setting for specific classes in a separate setting, which will be a small group setting with more focused instruction (McEwan, 1998, pp. 29-30). The next tier up has students in a permanently separate setting known as a resource room, but would still be located in a regular public school (McEwan, 1998, p. 30). The highest tier of services is a separate facility in the form of either a special education campus or a residential private placement facility (McEwan, 1998, p. 31).

These interventions are significant because, in 1991, ADHD was included in IDEA as a specific category of disability, and that these students were now eligible for these types of interventions:

> Because rates of diagnosis of ADHD dramatically increased across the United States throughout [the] decade [after recognition], it certainly appears that educational policy matters. In other words, labels that produce mandated services tend to get used. (Slee, 2010, p. 77)

Here is where money would begin to come into play, as Slee (2010) points out by arguing:

> Accountability encourages schools to place children with ADHD in special education classes for 2 reasons: (1) such children are afforded more services, which might raise their test scores; and (2) in at least some areas, they do not have to be 'counted' in the district's overall test score average. (p. 79)

This assertion can be further substantiated in a comparative study between states that have varying policies in relation to funding and accountability as illustrated by Hinshaw (2014) who pointed out that "local medical 'culture' and payment policies were often

highly relevant" in terms of the identification and diagnosis of students with behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD (p. 70). Hinshaw (2014) goes on to argue that "children tend to be diagnosed after they have entered the school setting, with low school grades or test scores a major trigger for referral [and that] ADHD often results from a lack of 'fit' between the school settings and expectations on the one hand, and behavior and learning styles on the other" (p. 71). Tying in with themes in chapter 2, it seems that ultimately labels such as ADD and ADHD might actually be more closely associated with accountability and control than a genuine desire to help students. Roger Slee (2010) sums it up quite well suggesting that, "calling poor kids disabled helps the school to acquire resources they wouldn't otherwise be entitled to" (p. 54). Perhaps the evolution of policy and to a large extent practice in relation to students with these types of behaviors have developed along side a general trend toward a positivist measurability and accountability movement in the United States that has ultimately caught these students in a high stakes game where they are not necessarily the winners.

I am drawn back at this point to the theme of orientation; again it seems as considered in chapter 4, that classrooms have been turned into fields of straightness and to defy that straightness, the consequences are procedures, interventions, and labels. Moreover, I would pose the concern with orientation to our positioning toward attentional disorders themselves, and suggest that our current approaches lack the ability to see beyond our current starting point:

> Orientations are about how we begin, how we proceed from here. Husserl relates the questions of this or that side to the point of here, which he also describes as

> the zero point of orientation, the point from which the world unfolds and which makes what is "there" over "there." It is from this point that the differences between this side and that side matter. It is also only given that we are here at this point, that near and far are lived as relative markers of distance. Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann also describe orientation as a question of one's starting point: "The place in which I find myself, my actual 'here,' is the starting point for my orientation in space." The starting point for orientation is the point from which the world unfolds: the here of the body and the where of its dwelling. (Ahmed, 2006, p. 545)

Consider for a moment that which I have written in this last section regarding policy toward ADHD. Might it be fair to suggest, as a phenomenological reductive statement, that the development of schooling has resulted in the creation of fields in which we insert beings with the expectation of performing as straight objects, and further that our orientation toward solutions is to *straighten* the object, rather than to *queer* the field?

Diagnosis (How Performances are Received)

To continue the metaphor, in order to straighten, one must first determine that which is non-straight:

> The theatrical sense of an "act" forces a revision of the individualist assumptions underlying the more restricted view of constituting acts within phenomenological discourse. As a given temporal duration within the entire performance, "acts" are a shared experience and collective action. (Butler, 1988, p. 525)

What if we began to understand ADHD as a constituted performance, a shared act that we have given a reified category? We might remember back to chapter two and the poem of "Fidgety Philip," only to ask ourselves at what point the actions of individuals became a collective action, a shared performance with a given name, ADHD?

Since its mention in the DSM III in 1980 (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 437) diagnoses of the disorder steadily increased, and yet a precision surrounding diagnosis seemed to be more and more difficult to locate, as Brown and Wynne's (1984) study indicates, warning about, "a burgeoning concern regarding the lack of specificity as to the precise meaning of the term 'attentional disturbance' which has been attributed to hyperactive children" (p. 38). Even that early, it was clear that a collective performance of ADHD was being established, and from this came a collective understanding, even as a specific articulation of the disorder was less than forthcoming.

Moving into the 1990s, popularity of the diagnoses of ADD and ADHD increased, yet this trend of questioning the reliability of diagnoses increased as well. By this point, however, with the publication of the previously discussed *Driven to Distraction* and *Why Johnny Can't Concentrate*, ADD and ADHD had been given the level of popular recognition needed to develop the collective role of ADD/ADHD kid. The run away popularity of the concept of ADD and ADHD happened despite a reticence on the part of some researchers to clearly define the disorder: Gordon Forbes contended in his 1998 study that no single procedure, observation, or behavioral characteristic is sufficient to support a diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (p. 461).

Forbes did, however, go on to evaluate one such instrument used to aid in diagnosis, The Test of Variables of Attention, commonly refereed to as TOVA (Forbes, 1998, p. 461). Crafted around the conditions that best "differentiate ADHD and *normal* children" (emphasis added), TOVA was forecasted by Forbes to make a useful

contribution to the clinical diagnosis of ADHD (Forbes, 1998, p. 463). Forbes does go on to outline an underlying issue with the disorder, citing Barkley's (1990) claim suggesting, "there are many unresolved problems with both the theoretical basis and the reliability of the diagnosis (as cited in Forbes, 1998, p. 462). Forbes concludes his study by suggesting that TOVA might be a useful tool, adding however "TOVA by itself, just like behavior ratings, interviews, or any other diagnostic tool, does not have sufficient discriminative validity to conclusively determine a diagnosis" (Forbes, 1998, p. 474).

Even within this current reframing of ADHD around the notion of executive functions, there is still a problem with developing a clear diagnosis. Certainly parents, teachers, and students make unofficial diagnoses every day because the constituted performance of ADHD seems so obvious to so many, and yet even still there is an ambiguity in clinical diagnosis. The Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Functions (BRIEF) and The Brown ADD rating scale for adults (BADDS) and the Barkley Deficits in executive functioning Scale (BDEFS) are all current rating scales used to indicate possible executive function impairments which are associated with ADHD (Brown, 2013, p. 83). While these are typically viewed as accurately identifying specific executive functioning impairments, there is still the caveat that a clinical assessment interview is necessary to determine a diagnosis of ADHD (Brown, 2013, p. 88). Brown (2013) further indicates that more concrete empirical measures such as Neurometrics, brain-imaging, and brain mapping have not been proven as reliable in clinical studies, despite parents often seeking what they deem as more objective measures for diagnosis (p. 94-95). One interesting point is that Brown (2013) concludes his section on diagnosis by

suggesting that education about ADHD is an important aspect of assessment of ADHD (p. 95). The logic here appears that the more one knows, the more likely they will pursue further screening, but the effect seems more of a perpetuation of a constituted performance of what it is to be ADHD.

While it is important in positioning ADD and ADHD historically that a strong emphasis be placed on diagnosis, it is at least equally important to stress that while diagnosis has been a troublingly inconsistent factor in the history of these behaviors, the overwhelming emphasis on how to fix these behaviors have been rather alarmingly consistent. In fact, one might say that treatment of these behaviors evolved along with diagnosis, rather than coming along significantly later. It is for these reasons that we now turn from the disjoined history of diagnosis to the equally disjointed, but troublingly medicine-dominated history of the treatment of behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD.

Treatment

It might be useful at this point to consider treatment of behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD in three basic groupings: medicine, environment, and nutrition. Medicine seems the logical place to begin predominately because medication and the behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD have a rather storied history, arising at least in part because there is a historical connection between the diagnosis of conditions associated with ADD and DHD type behaviors and the medical treatment of these conditions. As pointed out earlier in the paper, there was at one time believed to be such a positive response to certain medications, namely stimulants, by individuals with

behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD that one could diagnose individuals based on their responses to stimulant use (Guyer, 2000, p. 16). This idea, however, is confounded by a rather interesting insight noted by Judith Rapoport in the early 1960s in which she conducted a study that found stimulant use to have an equally focusing effect on individuals both without ADD and ADHD and with ADD and ADHD (as cited in Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 452). This rather interesting finding led Mayes and Rafalovich (2007) to posit the obvious question: "If the vast majority of children's behavior and performance benefited from taking stimulants, then how hyperactive did a child have to be to qualify as having a genuine mental impairment" (p. 452)?

It is with this context in mind that we might consider with some skepticism the history of the correlation between medications and behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD. The history is a fairly long one, more so than one might expect. Three different researchers, Bradley, Molitch, and Sullivan, all began to document an interesting correlation between amphetamine use and IQ testing performance as early as 1937 (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 445). It might seem hard to imagine that the amphetamine in question, Benzedrine, which would later become the drug of choice for beat poets and rock musicians, was actually tested on children simply to make them perform better on a test.

Benzedrine was soon supplanted by Dexedrine, credited as one of the first stimulants given to children specifically with behaviors associated with the ADD and ADHD diagnosis (Guyer, 2000, p. 17). Not long after, in 1961, the Food and Drug Administration approved the now famous medication, Ritalin, in 1961 for use in children

with behavioral problems. A later study by Conners and Eisenberg suggested Ritalin caused, "statistically significant improvement," in populations of children with behavioral concerns. (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 447).

Stimulants including Ritalin are still used today, and are still being measured for success, with a fairly recent study by Frank Bymaster et al. (2012) suggesting that certain stimulants "have an immediate onset of action in ADHD, are effective against all three core deficits of the disorder, and have a response rate of about 70%" (p. 523). This use of stimulants is in fact so widely accepted that the argument has actually been made that denying a child with behaviors associated with ADD and ADHD medication ought to be considered a form of abuse (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007, p. 436).

It ought to be mentioned at this point that other forms of medication have been at least attempted in relation to these behaviors, including massive doses of vitamins, which dates back to the 1940s. But, there has been little or no research to support this notion (Silver, 2000, p. 59). In 1982 a study was conducted to suggest that food additives might be causative, but very little correlation was found to support this claim as well (Ward & Guyer, 2000, p. 51).

The biological attempts to treat these behaviors have not always, however, been chemical. As early as 1975, there were positive correlations found between allergies and brain function as noted in Feingold (1975), yet no clear cause and effect has been clarified occurring to Silver as of 2000 (Silver, 2000, p. 63). However, in the recent study by Stevenson et al. (2014), it was noted, "restricted elimination diets may be beneficial for children with ADHD with a history of adverse reactions to food (p. 423).

What stands out again with this particular method is that many of the restrictive diets frequently suggested for children with these types of behaviors often mirror models of good nutrition for all children, suggesting again that specialized treatment for certain populations of individuals deemed to have these ADD and ADHD types of behaviors might simply be constituted as good practices in general, not only for these individuals.

"Best Practices" or a Return to Foucault's Exercise?

What can educational practitioners and policy makers do, then? It seems that a significant portion of the history of ADD and ADHD type behaviors have focused on identification and targeted treatment, but are there practices that schools can implement for these individuals? The research here suggests that there is not necessarily a silver bullet to this concern, rather, as has been suggested earlier in this paper, the same kinds of best practices for students in general can often be seen as productive for students with ADD and ADHD type behaviors. Fairly early after the DSM made ADD an officially recognized condition, Hamilton (1984) suggested that, "parent training programs based on behavior therapy principles have proven effective in assisting parents to modify the problematic behaviors of their children" (p. 61). And while this is a significant point, and one that goes back to the parental environment that the child is in, one cannot help but wonder if teachers in the classroom might not have more power in shaping the learning outcomes for these students than parents, and even medicine and other treatments.

Stevens (2000) makes a powerful observation about teaching and learning in relation to students with these types of behaviors that bears considerable weight on our discussion:

> When classroom teachers see an ADHD student in action, they often fail to recognize what they are looking at. They see blurting out of answers and the constant talking, and think 'Can't take turns. Bad manners.' …yet in every school there are a few teachers who have a combination of personal temperament and instructional styles that make it easy for students with ADHD type behavior to succeed without causing undue frustration on either classmates or teachers. (p. 68)

Immediately here I am drawn to Glenn Hudak's observation in his work on Autism: "all of us are dependent on others; all of us need a facilitating environment, not just those labeled "disabled" (Hudak, 2011, p. 69). It seems in this context that reflexive and adaptive teaching practices ought not be carte blanche delivered as a panacea because there is still the problem of deeming some with a disorder in need of facilitation and others ok on their own. Of course, even if the answer is yes, this becomes a complex endeavor and one that at the very least requires one to identify what is going on in the classrooms of these few teachers who are really creating positive learning experiences for all students. One of the pitfalls here seems to be a focus on technique and method almost exclusively whereas Stevens (2000) seems to be suggesting that there is a philosophical shift in attitude and approach needed before technique and method need ever be considered:

> Educators who view non-traditional learners as an exciting challenge…find ADHD students a delight...part of the trick is that they admire these youngsters and recognize many of their differences as gifts (p. 68)

It is critical then, as we begin to discuss best practices, and there are a *huge* number of sources devoted to best practices, that we consider the possibility that best practice might

start with an attitude, rather than a procedure. Here we see how easily we might return to an objectification of the body and the Foucauldian notion of exercise; with this in mind I have provided a brief snapshot of some of the procedures considered in relation to best practices when teaching students with ADD and ADHD type behaviors.

Richard Soppit (2012) in his chapter on ADHD in Peer and Reid's *Special Educational Needs: A Guide for Inclusive Practice* lists a number of steps that teachers can take when approaching students with these behaviors (p. 190). I will consider these behaviors in two basic groups, the first being procedural behaviors, and the second being more philosophical approaches. In terms of the procedural behaviors, proximity is considered important so that teachers can clearly and quickly manage behaviors before they become a serious concern (Soppit, 2012, p. 190). Praising for positive results, positive reinforcement using tokens of some type, stipulated quiet areas, and smaller groupings in collaborative learning all fall under these procedural type practices (Soppit, 2012, p. 190). Interestingly, a number of more philosophical suggestions were also made in the same general list of best practices. "Appropriately interesting activities," for example, made the list (Soppit, 2012, p. 190). This rather nebulous statement begs the question so what is the teacher doing the rest of the time, appropriately uninteresting activities? "Promotion of structure and predictability," also makes this list, which seems potentially at odds with "appropriately interesting activities" (Soppit, 2012, p. 190). The next list of best practices I have grouped together seem to suggest the student with ADD and ADHD type behaviors needs a more simplistic education: "Instructions need to be

simple and unambiguous…[there should be a] Promotion of structure and predictability, [and] Simplification by dividing into manageable chunks" (Soppit, 2012, p. 190). With these practices we can see the rather clear pattern and the subtly coded message: these kids need the classroom experience dumbed down to a predictable, manageable, and simple process. Sandra Rief (2005) reiterates many of the same themes as Soppit, in particular clarity, simplicity, as well as praise and positive feedback (p. 140-141). Rief (2005) goes on to spend an entire chapter on compliance techniques and strategies, citing Dr. Terry Illes procedure to "foster compliance" for ADHD students, involving a "compliance chart" and a daily and weekly reward. (p. 143-144). Again, we can see this coded message in relation to control and compliance.

Implications for Practice: Queer Pedagogies of Attention

It is often my tendency to problematize rather than problem solve, and this leads to pointing out that which isn't working while ignoring potential solutions. I often reflect back to a past colleague who would often ask me "ok I get it, but how could this look in my classroom?" As a practitioner that approaches pedagogy philosophically, I tend to shy away from developing and distributing forms, templates and strategies because I fear breaking down barriers and binaries to simply to build up new ones. For example, the moment that I try to 'read' bodily attention through a student's comportment, I risk of implementing a brand new binary of how to judge a student in attention. For this reason I tread warily in suggesting specific teaching methods, but rather I prefer to imagine a queer pedagogy of attention as reorienting one's starting point into the classroom. While the broader policy implications of this reorientation of attention for the institution of

schooling are potentially paradigm shifting and worthy of significant further analysis, a reoriented approach to the classroom might be somewhat more describable in this context. To that end I suggest four reorientations that one might consider a starting point for a queer pedagogy of attention.

1. Reorient what we think we know about what a student is thinking. In chapter 4 I troubled the difficulty of knowing another's mind. This should not be a discouragement to develop collective understandings in classroom spaces, but rather a cautionary note about attentional assumptions. Physical signs of apathy or inattention don't always correlate to what the mind might be doing, and there may be additional physical signs of engagement that a teacher overlooks. The jump of a eureka moment, the heated face of frustration, or even anger induced shaking, these are all aspect of the meaning making process that matter, but the inclination to convert these into permanent significations of attention should be resisted.
2. Reorient what we think we know about what a student is doing. This involves orienting from a management of docile bodies to a participatory engagement with dynamic bodies. In understanding the body as the texture of consciousness is to realize that the body is involved in consciousness though making meaning and articulating meaning. In practice this is borne out through students being physically free while actually processing pieces of thought, whether through obvious content centered manipulatives or through movements not directly content relate; this might mean students need space to

actually move while thinking, or simply have kinesthetic outlets as various as play-doh to kush balls. Instead of static discussion in a classroom space, the ability to walk and talk is also quite powerful. Large sections of my dissertation were parsed out during daily running outings with a colleague. Utilizing the body in articulation of learning is powerful as well, and might be as simple as having students articulate ideas through creating static images with their bodies, or asking them to express in physical terms what they are feeling and thinking as they consider an idea. Often frustration, elation or even apathy over a topic can be felt more easily than spoken, so tailoring forms of expression to bodily acts can overcome language barriers.

3. Blur the boundary between the thought and the thing. Signifiers are problematic in pedagogy for the simple fact that we might attach the signs to subtly or even radically different signifiers. This is true with actions as well as words. A physical response such as a flushed cheek might have a specific signification, or it might not. A key here is keeping open the possibility of misinterpretation, and never reifying an action. Language is also critical as it is both a key to making collective meaning as well as a barrier to understanding what the student might be thinking. Collective meaning making is a hermeneutic process, and involves constant listening, understanding, and clarification. We constantly ask of our students to articulate understanding of content, and yet we as educators are seldom called upon to articulate back our understanding of our students thinking. This is

different from giving a grade, or a paper marked up with comments-this is a genuine attempt to understand how our students are processing and articulating the learning presented before their consciousnesses. This might be as simple as simply asking "is this what you are trying to say," or "what do you take that word to mean in this context?"

4. Proceed with the assumption that consciousness might NOT be indelibly tied to attention. Consciousness is always conscious of something, but it seems that it isn't possible to attend to a thing while simultaneously making meaning of it. This means that, if we are actually making meaning out of a thing presented before consciousness, we are out of attention for significant periods of time while we make this meaning. This time out of attention might be brief, and we quite desperately attempt to cover it up. This faking of attention becomes a defense mechanism. Many times I have asked the defiantly quiet student why they are not participating only to hear 'I am thinking about it' as a response. Conscious meaning making takes time and space, and we have a tendency in the classroom not to allow for this. It is in response to this lack of time and space allotted for meaning making that students develop defense mechanisms. That *smiling nodder* in the first row might not be 'getting it' any more than the child gazing off into the window, it might simply be that one is better at 'faking attention' than another.

I Wonder as I Wander: The Mind and Body Ever Connected

And so here we are--in our modern conceptualization we have historical performance, sets of social actions, which have been systematically pathologized and normalized as a disorder that ought to be treated. It seems, as I reflect over my work to this point, that we have come to this moment because of a fundamental belief that the mind is separate from the body. I have sought, in the preceding pages, to develop an understanding of attention in the context of the embodied subject, or being in the world.

The truth is that we cannot understand the wondering mind though an examination of the wandering body, or vice versa:

> We showed with Gestalt theory that we cannot identify a layer of sensory givens that would immediately depend upon the sense organs: the slightest sensory given cannot be presented except as integrated into a configuration and as already 'articulated.' (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 162)

In other words, we measure attention based on how an individual articulates this attention, which is tantamount to "hegemony, by professionals, of imposing a rather narrow, strictly defined 1-to-1 correspondence between body and mental capacity" (Hudak, 66). In other words, when I have committed an action, the meaning that I make through that action is not fixed, rather it is as variable as the historical memories and bodily sensory inputs that allow us to produce meaning in the first place. Here lies the absurdity with thinking that we can concretely measure attention: we are only ever measuring the articulation of the object of thought that has been created.

To the empiricists who make much of the objective truth of ADHD, then, I remind them, "Biological existence gears into human existence and is never indifferent to its particular rhythm. This, we will now add, does not prevent "living" (*leben*) from being a primordial operation from which it becomes possible to "live" (*erleben*) such and such a world" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 162). It is true we are bodies--not that we have bodies, but that we ARE bodies--and these bodies have biological realities. The central implication in my interaction with ADHD here in this study is not that there is no biological truth behind ADHD, but the immense complexity of a project regarded as so straightforward: that we are trying to measure the bodies ability to articulate the mind's object of meaning which has been constructed through embodied and historical performance.

To further consider the implications, one has to acknowledge that this is absolutely political, and underneath the notions of power, money, and control, lies the theme of the mind and the body:

> The politics revolving around disability (generally) and autism (in particular) are the historically situated attempts to declare a 1-to-1 correspondence between body actions and mental activities: i.e., equating the "disabled body" with a "disabled mental" capacity. The presumption of competency challenges this commonsense assumption by asserting being "body-tied," i.e., having an "unruly body" does not mean, nor does it imply, that those labeled autistic lack the ability to think, reflect, or communicate (for some with facilitation) their experiences. (Hudak, 2011, p. 62)

It is this ascribing meaning to bodily acts that forms the basis for most accepted pedagogical approaches to attention. What would it mean to presume competency rather

than make assumptions about cognitive ability based on presumed bodily significations? What if we sought to understand more clearly how bodily acts helped enrich attention, rather than assume that they always obfuscate it? The first step here would be to admit that "there is no Cartesian split between body and mind…there is no necessity for there to be 1-to-1 correspondences between bodily engagement…and the meaning one makes of that engagement" (Hudak, 2011, pp. 64-65). To reorient this one to one correspondence is to further trouble that which we assume about bodily acts, thinking, and articulation. It is an exploration of the articulation of attention, or a plumbing the depths of the lost moment, that I will explore in further work. It is important here to take up the work of Merleau-Ponty, who reminds us that "we will understand…better by clarifying the notions of 'expression' and "signification" – which belong to the world of language and of constituted thought – that we have just applied uncritically to the relations between the body and the psyche and whose correction must be learned through our bodily experience" (Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Preception, 2012, p. 162). To explore this tension between the articulation of evidences of attention and how that articulation is interpreted is the next step in exploring the queer connection between the wondering mind and the wandering body.

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